
DIVA
DESIGNER DOGS
POOCH APPAREL
HIRSUTES YOU, MADAM
Why we're growing our body hair
BI WOMEN ON TV
Why it's death by erasure for bisexual characters
TRANS 101
READERS' QUESTIONS ANSWERED
EXCLUSIVE
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"I'M TAKING MY BODY POSITIVE MESSAGE TO A POP AUDIENCE"
ZANELE MUHOLI
The photographer documenting black lesbian lives
53 WOMEN
CELEBRATE AT PRIDE & UK BLACK PRIDE

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Kerrie and Sandy



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Kylee and Annie

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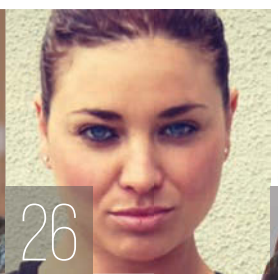
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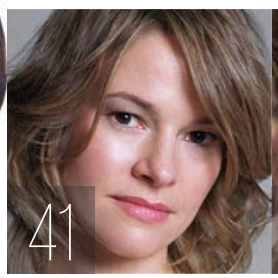
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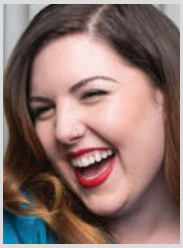












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Christa Holka
christaholka.com

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EDITOR'S LETTER



Now that the sun has finally cast its rays over most of the UK, it's officially summer and we lady-lovers are kicking back to a summer soundtrack mostly featuring songs by our cover star Mary Lambert (p68). Pride season so far has been inspiring, hasn't it? It's so great to see so many of us, celebrating our diverse communities, and DIVA's coverage of Pride In London and UK Black Pride (p76) shows the confidence many of us feel. How different, not only to the experience of lesbian and bi women in countries such as South Africa (p48) but also to how life was for queer women in the UK not so long ago (p74). But our growing confidence is being reflected in tons of ways today, be it the ways we choose to wear our body hair (p29) or be proud of our vulvas (p60), however they look and whatever negative views we hear about them. We're celebrating bisexual stuntwoman Tiger Rudge (p26), who pushes her body to the limit in some of Hollywood's biggest action movies, and finally, we're thrilled to feature DIVA's first ever dog fashion shoot (p62). If you're reading this in the digital format, you're in for a treat with our hilarious behind-the-scenes video. Move over, Creature Comforts! And if you don't already subscribe to DIVA, why not get it delivered to your door before it hits the shops and save 25% while you're at it. Details on p10. If you want DIVA on the go, pick up a digital subscription and save 35%. We'll also give you access to exclusive bonus content – details on p94.

Jane Czyzselka
DIVAMAG.CO.UK

NEXT MONTH

SEPTEMBER ISSUE

on sale 20 August



- Heather Peace on life as a new mum, new music and her upcoming tour
- Sandi Toksvig on why we should all join the Women's Equality Party
- Only there for the ratings: lesbian and bi women on reality TV shows
- Wentworth Prison S3: the other TV prison show hits our screens
- Film: why is it so hard to get lesbian and bi stories onto the big screen?
- Special focus: what's it like to be a lesbian in China?
- Sex and relationships: choosing celibacy
- Crush! Meet the creators of a new musical set in a girls' school in the 60s

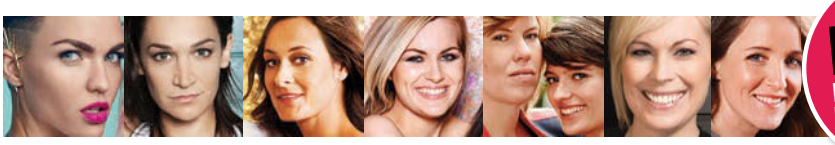
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THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE OF DIVA IS ON SALE FROM 20 AUGUST 2015

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LETTERS

Star Letter

THE SCENE: USE IT OR LOSE IT

I'm a 27-year-old lesbian and have been openly gay since school. I have been on "the scene" for over 10 years now and have found acquaintances, best friends and love. "Back in the day" in Nottingham, where I live, we had multiple venues to choose from; the Foresters, Central, AD2, Lord Roberts and the nightclub NG1, to name a few! Many have come and gone; at present we only have the Foresters and Propaganda (which is turning straight by the day). NG1 was known all over the country as a go-to club. Now I hear stories of LGBT people being turned away at the door of the nightclub that once welcomed us with open arms! It's not just Nottingham. Me and my friends have been all over the country, visiting different gay scenes and Prides over the years, and have seen the decline happening all over. And the LGBT venues that are still open only seem to have a quarter of the occupancy they once had. Where have all the gays gone? Don't tell me all us lesbians have just settled down in a cosy flat with two cats! Where is the next generation of LGBT guys? Is it because the straights have invaded our precious scene and we no longer feel welcome?

One of my straight friends asked why am I so bothered; after all, we wanted equality, right? Yes, but we, the LGBT community, need somewhere to go where we can be ourselves, somewhere we can kiss and be affectionate to our partners and not get frowned upon!

We need to support our scene and keep it alive for future generations!

LAURA, Nottingham



WRITE TO US

letters@divamag.co.uk

or use the old-fashioned method and drop us a line at

DIVA MAGAZINE
Spectrum House, Unit M
32-34 Gordon House Road
London NW5 1LP
United Kingdom

I FOUND LOVE WITH DIVA

I am just about to graduate from university with a 2:1. Stereotype or not, I studied sport science. Aside from the stress, these have been the best three years of my life. Even though it took me double the amount of time to do anything, being dyslexic. I have read DIVA since the age of about 17, when I was embarrassed in WHSmiths, having to reach up to the top shelf, then hiding them from my family because I wasn't comfortable telling them, in fear of my dad. I have always been open to my friends.

In my first year I met three of my now best friends; coming out to them was easy. A few weeks after telling them, my mum and I were out with a mutual friend; after my mum's third bottle of wine she asked me what my "deep dark secret" was. It scared the life out of me. But she was fine with it and asked if I was seeing a woman. But I wasn't, after a few relationships gone wrong.

I decided to try DIVA Date. After a month I got a message from a woman who I connected with. We chatted for hours and after I asked for her number, we'd text every evening when she had finished work, then that Christmas we met up for the first time. In February I asked her to be my girlfriend, from that day to now I can happily say I have never been more happy. The best part is we bonded over Orange Is The New Black, which we have always watched together at the same time.

So in a roundabout way I'm trying to say thank you because you have always been there for me. Thank you for giving me the confidence to be who I am. To know that it is ok to wear a suit to graduation because I am comfortable in that, opposed to a dress.

LUCY

MORE FEMININE LESBIANS, PLEASE

My wife and I enjoy reading DIVA every month. We love the humour and the broad range of articles; it's always an enjoyable read.

However, we do find that feminine lesbians are under-represented by the magazine and, as gay women who are feminine, we feel slightly marginalised by this.

It would be good to see more articles and photographs of feminine women, and perhaps an exploration of women who don't use dildos as part of their love-life.

KIRSTY

Opinions expressed by correspondents and contributors do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors of DIVA magazine or its publishers.

WIN!

STAR LETTER PRIZE

With summer here, you need a wireless Bluetooth speaker that can not only go anywhere but also take the heat – from water, sand and dirt to spilled drinks, bumpy bike rides and even a tumble off a tent (oops!). Altec Lansing's "everything-proof" IP67-rated BoomJacket (£99.99) fits the bill. It has an industry-leading 40-hour battery life and is barely bigger or heavier than a wallet. BONUS: it can be attached to your bike, kayak, tent poles, tennis or volleyball uprights, or nearly anywhere else your adventures take you. Get yours from Dixons, Currys and Carphone Warehouse.





Last month you loved DIVA's cover shoot with the "amazing, goddess-like" Samira Wiley

PHOTO SOPHY HOLLAND

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@_AmberDever
Wow. Samira Wiley is looking amazing and goddess like in @DIVAmagazine cover this month.

@ParisToPalermo
I know the whole world is having a twitch over @RubyRose but @samirawiley is just eyewateringly beautiful.

@JooliaBlackwell
What a wonderful year to have a @DIVAmagazine subscription <3 <3 @RubyRose @samirawiley :D

@salesonfilm
ok this @DIVAmagazine article on samira wiley is titled 'poussey riot' plz take a moment to appreciate this pun game.

@griff781131
mum came over 4 a cuppa after making her 1 I found her in my room reading my @DIVAmagazine smiling, think she's finally accepted my gayness!

@AshleighGerman
Just read every page of July's edition. Love it. Struck every chord w/me, feels like I'm meant 2 read at this point in my life. Thx 4 a gr8 mag!

@Spinelli_xo
Little tip when reading @DIVAmagazine on the train double check the next page is not full of breasts before opening it for everyone to see!

@sweetersong
As a bisexual women who is poly, I was very happy to see your July issue has articles about both being poly and biphobia.

@katherinehoc
Bought @DIVAmagazine today how did I not know it existed?

@justbekk
Ordering newest and a couple back editions of @DIVAmagazine to cheer myself up after all of this girl drama!!

Pleased to meet you!



Every issue, we invite one of our readers to tell us about her relationship with DIVA.



NAME & AGE:
LAURA HOLLIES, 30
FROM:
CLECKHEATON, NEAR LEEDS
OCCUPATION:
TEACHER
IDENTITY:
PANSEXUAL

WHAT MADE YOU START READING DIVA?
Many, many years ago, whilst in my local supermarket, I spotted DIVA. On the front cover were two hot girls – intrigued, I bought it. The rest, as they say, is Herstory!

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A READER?
About eight years.

PRINT OR DIGITAL?
Print, always. I like to feel the glossy pages between my fingers, and look back over articles as I please...

WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT DIVA?
I like how the magazine is current and keeps up to date with all types of issues (positive and negative). It is a real force for women and people of all backgrounds. There is always something for "us", as a collective, to relate to!

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OF?
Honestly? More sexy, heart-racing articles! Then in a complete opposite – more articles about couples going through having a family and their experiences...

WHO ELSE READS YOUR COPY?
My girlfriend and, I have a sneaking suspicion, the window cleaner!

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR COPY WHEN YOU'VE READ IT?
Copies are kept on the coffee table for a while, then they go to my girlfriend Zea's art studio, where she uses the pictures for inspiration in her artworks!

WHO WOULD YOU PUT ON THE COVER OF DIVA AND WHY?
Older, experienced lesbians/gay/queer women who perhaps have some pearls of wisdom for us all...

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DV230



Family ties



JAY BERNARD PONDERS THE MEANING OF FAMILY IN THE UNLIKELY SETTING OF A MISSISSIPPI STRIP CLUB

The other day I received a call from my aunt. She lives in Jamaica and she'd heard through the grapevine that I was queer. Her phone call was the first I'd ever had from a relative with the explicit intention of letting me know that she knew. I didn't expect it, I didn't desire it, I didn't know what to do with it. She wanted to know why I had cut myself off. Why I had changed my name. Why I looked so different on my website. And because it was the crack of dawn (or, 10 in the morning for everyone else), and because I was standing in the bathroom with a hangover, and because I gave up on being close to my family about a decade ago, I said thanks for calling and have never phoned her back.

I realised a few years ago that I had closed off the possibility of being close to anyone in my family. I was raised in a large, Caribbean arrangement – Anglicans on one side, Rastafarians and Methodists on the other. There is no doubt in my mind that I was loved, but I don't think I was ever liked. The only time I have ever felt truly close to my cousins was late one night when we snuck downstairs and came across the adult channel. I was amazed. They were amazed. We all learned how babies are made. Later, the notion of coming out to my extended family seemed strange and pointless. For one, I have never been one for establishing intimate relationships on the basis of biological relation. I have never completely fallen for the idea of a chosen family either, even though I desire it. I am a confusing sibling, a sarcastic child, and will probably be a complicated parent.

How funny, then, to be standing in a strip club in Mississippi, with a handful of one dollar bills, feeling this woman twerk like a mother against me. We shall call her Didi. It's 2am. Everyone is getting fucked up. Krunk. The music just got heavier. Didi is, by association, a member of a rainbow family called the Capones. A rainbow family is a system that began decades ago as a way for black gay men to support each other when their families kicked them out of home. The idea spread to women too. As long as I don't open my mouth and reveal that I am from Croydon, I am seen as part of this system. I'm a stud. People use male and female pronouns interchangeably, with a level of ease and respect I have never experienced before. I blend in.

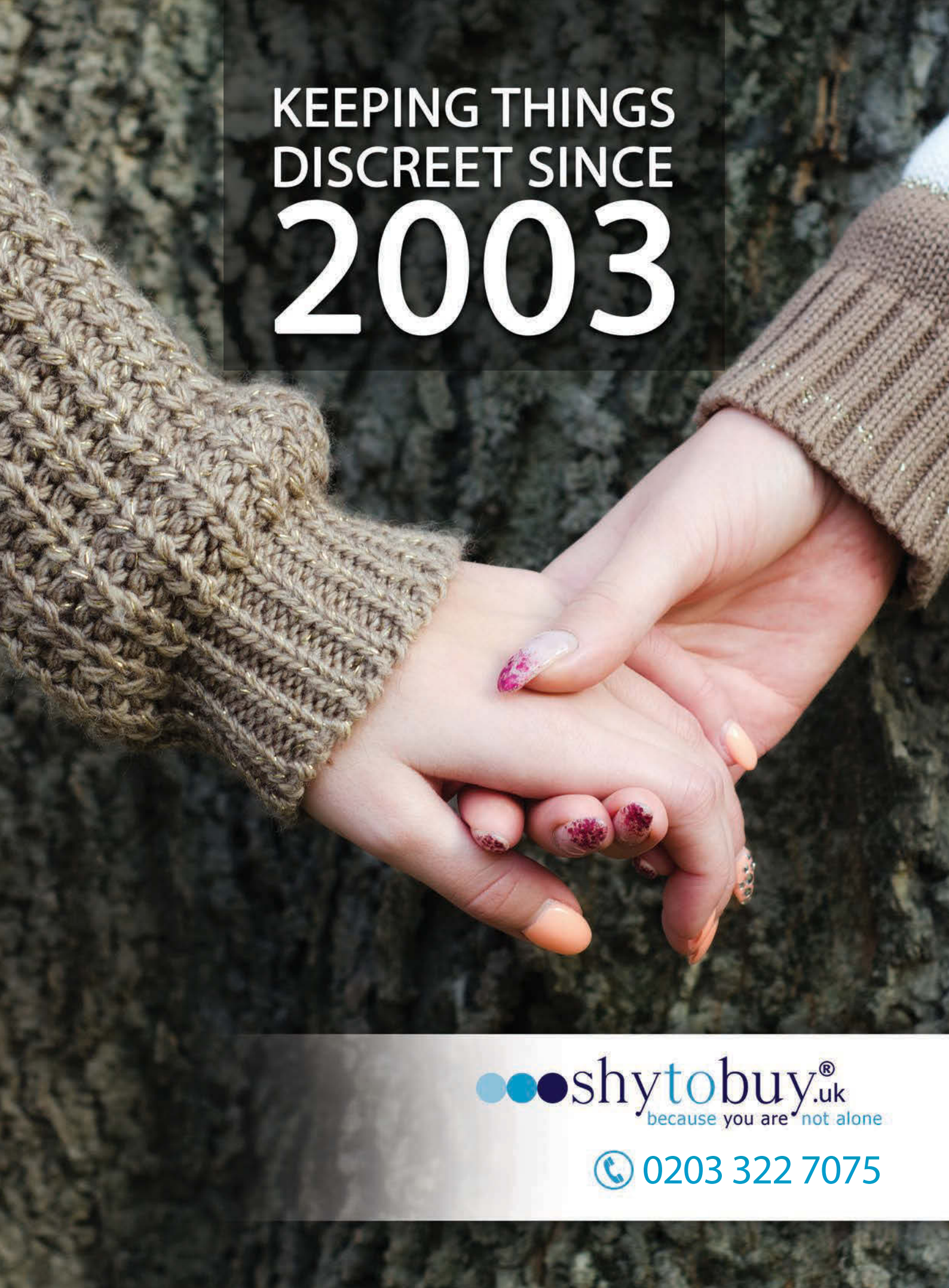
The father of the family – who we shall call CD – invites me to be an honorary member and so, by association, Didi is my sister.

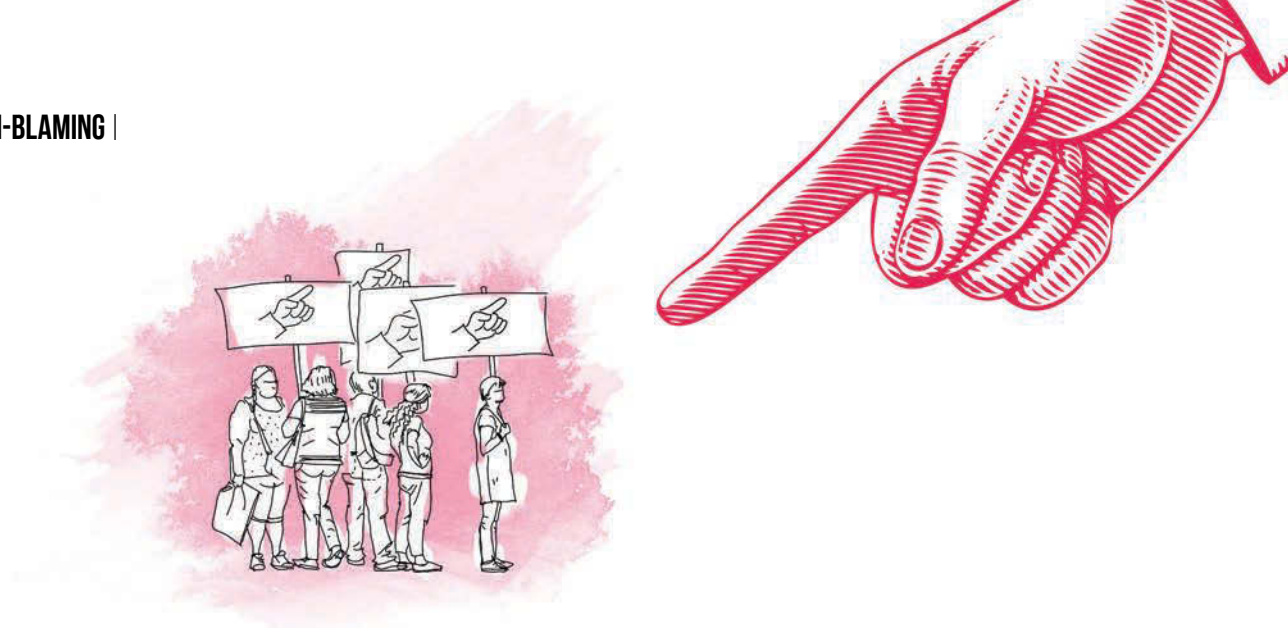
> Rainbow families supported black gay men when their families kicked them out

Maybe I am drawn to subverted family relations. Maybe sticking ones in my sister's thong is my idea of a happy home. Maybe that's why I was struck by how much I suddenly cared about her. The rainbow family system is inherently a fuck-you to the nuclear family. Fathers – usually older lesbians – can have hundreds of children. They open their homes to all the weirdos, outcasts, genderbenders, and give them some stability. True, the butch/femme dynamic rules the roost down there, but it doesn't erase the obvious queer values: Didi is going hard, wearing less, is increasingly surrounded by guys getting tanked, but across the room are the Capones. Over the course of the night, they will drop more ones than any guy in the room. In a funny way, it's how she makes her money.

It would be a stretch to say that I felt close to everyone, that it was perfect, and now I long to be part of that system. But I think my encounter with Didi cemented my suspicion that however much I long for closeness, I want the strangeness and intensity to be acknowledged too. I don't think I'll ever seek that in my biological family, and that makes it hard to go back to them. As much as I was touched by and appreciated it, my aunt's call felt too late. Ⓓ

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WHEN STRAIGHT, WHITE, MIDDLE-CLASS MEDIA PUNDITS DERIDE MINORITIES, WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON?

WORDS JANE CZYZSELSKA



Heard about the students who banned trans-exclusionary radical feminists from speaking at their universities? The working class, black feminists who pointed out to some straight, middle class, white feminists that their activism wasn't intersectional and didn't speak for them? All the above have been derided as "divisive", some are accused of being liberty-crushing, authoritarian "bullies".

You may have caught the Radio 4 programme, The Moral Maze, in which media pundits Michael Buerk, Melanie Phillips and Claire Fox denigrated so-called "victims" for whinging about their problems. Problems like, you know, homophobia, sexism, transphobia, racism and heteronormativity.

A dark cloud of deja vu descended as I sat in my kitchen, listening to the presenters mouthing off about people who dare to challenge dominant views about who owns public and virtual space.

Funny, isn't it, how certain members of the straight, white, cis-gender commentariat dismiss those who have the gall to complain about the white, middle-class, hetero- and cis-normative, neo-liberal news agenda prevalent in dominant media?

A handful of othered contributors were invited to join the show's regulars to speak from this denigrated perspective. Buerk explained those under the microscope were "people who have been politically and legally recognised as victims [who] are often keen to use their power, especially via social media, to silence those who offend or upset them".

Let's unpack this. Victims with power, eh? How does that work? The queer activists I know don't identify as victims, for starters. They critique the structural racism and sexism, the implicit and explicit cis and heterosexual cultural rules by which we're governed. God bless them for that, I say, or we'd still be living in the world of Mad Men's Don Draper and Joan Holloway, where "coloureds", "queers" and women experienced routine, unabashed discrimination.

Staying quiet in the face of this discrimination sounds closer to so-called victim mentality to me, if we're going to use the judgemental term at all, that is. And how about Twitter and clicktivism? Celebrity tweeters aside, these platforms are generally the go-to public arenas for those without power or access to a national newspaper, radio or TV station to air their views.

Unfortunately for those of us who aren't white, cis, heterosexual men and women, the creators of these kinds of (self-described) "provocative, combative," masculinist debates seem unable to extend empathy to members of oppressed minority groups, or acknowledge the specific issues and needs articulated by, say, trans people who prefer not to share a platform with people who seek to deny their gender identity, disabled lesbians and bi women who demand an end to cultural erasure, black lesbians and bi women who live with the daily psychic attrition of sexism, racism and anti-lesbian/bi prejudice.

All the above groups have legitimate grievances that need to be heard if they are to be addressed. Liberationists through the centuries have always spoken against their oppressors and if they hadn't, we'd still be living in a world where white, heterosexual men define the rules of engagement and rule the roost; oh, wait...

Far from being victim-speak, those who speak against the dominant narratives (see Janet Mock vs Piers Morgan, for example: *youtu.be/i_cjlZ4nlul*) demonstrate courage and self-care which benefits those who share a similar experience of prejudice and discrimination. But this "victim" blaming is the language and logic of the neo-liberals who seek to disavow the pain of others because to validate it would require them to make a connection with their own pain.

In her review of Neil Altman's book Working At The Margins, psychotherapist Chris Rose notes those who are on the margins are dehumanised by mainstream society precisely to avoid identification with them in a way that could produce unbearable pain. In their newspaper columns, radio spots and TV appearances, Melanie Phillips and her ilk repeatedly deny the lived experience of marginalised individuals. Perhaps Rose and Altman's explanations give us a clue as to why. Ⓓ

Victims with power, eh? How does that work?

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Cruising: a queer lowlife breakthrough

CHARLOTTE COOPER CELEBRATES THE SUBVERSIVE POTENTIAL OF THE PUBLIC PICK-UP



I saw an amazing cruising scene unfold on the tube the other night. Two fat white gay guys got on the train and one sat down. The standing guy looked a bit like a Daddy. He was approached by a younger brown-skinned man who said nothing to him, there wasn't even much eye contact, but he held the Daddy's hand and played with his fingers. At the next stop the brown-skinned man tried to persuade the Daddy to get off the train onto the platform with him, but it went nowhere and he left alone just as the doors were closing. The sitting man saw nothing of this, as far as I could tell, and neither did anyone else, but I saw it all happen. It made me think of my own experiences of cruising and being cruised in public.

In my late teens I was very good at picking up men I fancied. I wouldn't have to say much, we'd exchange a certain look and often this turned into a hot situation. But I never thought that I could do the same with women, I always lacked the confidence for that. It's been rare that dyke cruising has followed the same pattern, though there have been moments!

Instead, my queer cruising has been really quite peculiar. One time I went to see a heavy-duty play-piercing performance at a lesbian club in a city where I didn't really know anybody. Nothing much happened. Well, ok, so I watched a really sexy woman stick needles into her partner's neck until there was blood everywhere, but I went home alone. The next day I found myself at a neighbourhood community event where someone had set up a wholesome little petting zoo with goats and rabbits in a pen for the kiddies and their families. A different kind of play party! I like a cute fluffy animal so I got in there. Whilst I was stroking a sweet baby bunny I felt someone's eyes burning on me. I looked up and to my surprise I was being heavily cruised by someone who had seen me at the piercing show the night before. We shared a meaningful look and then went our separate ways. I had a donkey to feed.

More recently something happened that I still can't get my head around. I was on my way to see friends on the south coast and stopped at a service station on the M25 for a pee. The toilets were deserted. I picked a cubicle and sat down to do my business. I heard someone else come into the loos and, weirdly, they picked the cubicle next to me. As I was peeing, a woman's foot clad in an orthopaedic shoe made its way under the gap in the cubicle partition and took up residence in my space. I am not making this up. Was this a come-on? Why was this person's foot so boldly in my space? I was wearing Birkenstocks at the time, my tootsies suffer from various ailments and sometimes I need to wear something comfy. Did I press my own foot up against theirs? Did they have a preference for public sex with a larger lady in sensible shoes? Was this the beginning of a depraved anonymous wee-wee scene? Reader, I will leave the answer to those questions to you.

Sometimes I dream of being approached by a fabulous stranger, someone who can reveal something of the world to me, something hidden in ordinary life that I have not yet learned to see. That's what cruising is: you are no longer in the straight life, you are in a magical land of queer possibility. Even though my experiences have been ambiguous or bizarre to say the least, I love to watch people cruise. As the assimilation and gentrification in LGBT community continues apace, I sometimes feel like an endangered species but cruising is still here and I find it reassuring when queer lowlife breaks through into the everyday.

charlotte@divamag.co.uk

> Whilst stroking a sweet baby bunny I felt someone's eyes burning on me

PHOTO SARA DAVIDMANN

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When it comes to the crunch: Henrietta and Lily

BECAUSE SHE'S WORTH IT

PET FOOD SUPREMO HENRIETTA MORRISON HAS CHANGED DINNER TIME FOR DOGS AND CATS

When Henrietta Morrison discovered that a poor diet was the likely cause of her border terrier's persistent health problems, she did what any concerned dog-owner would do and started making all of her pet's meals from scratch, using nourishing and natural ingredients. The remarkable transformation in Lily's health was immediate.

That got Henrietta thinking about the mass-produced, highly-processed products on sale in supermarkets, which are often crammed full of the lowest-quality food ingredients such as meat meals, fillers and other ghastlies.

Shocked by what she and her vet brother found in some pet food brands, Henrietta spent two years working with a range of vets, nutritionists, cooks, dog-lovers and taste-testers to create Lily's Kitchen, which now produces over 80 products.

That was six years ago. Now the UK's fastest-growing pet food brand has revolutionised the way cats and dogs eat and has created a nourishing and natural alternative.

Says Henrietta: "Because Lily's Kitchen doesn't use the same ingredients as other brands, it doesn't look, smell and taste like normal pet food either. Gone is the pong and questionable appearance! In its place is natural nourishment to help promote a shiny coat, healthy skin, fresher breath and improved digestion. Lily's Kitchen customers tell us that they witness these benefits within just two weeks of moving to the food."

Taking its name from Henrietta's adorable border terrier Lily, Lily's Kitchen was the first to produce and launch ground-breaking, vet-approved dry pet food that's both grain and meat meal free. The company never uses unnecessary additives, rendered meats, animal or vegetable derivatives, artificial colours or flavours in any of its recipes.

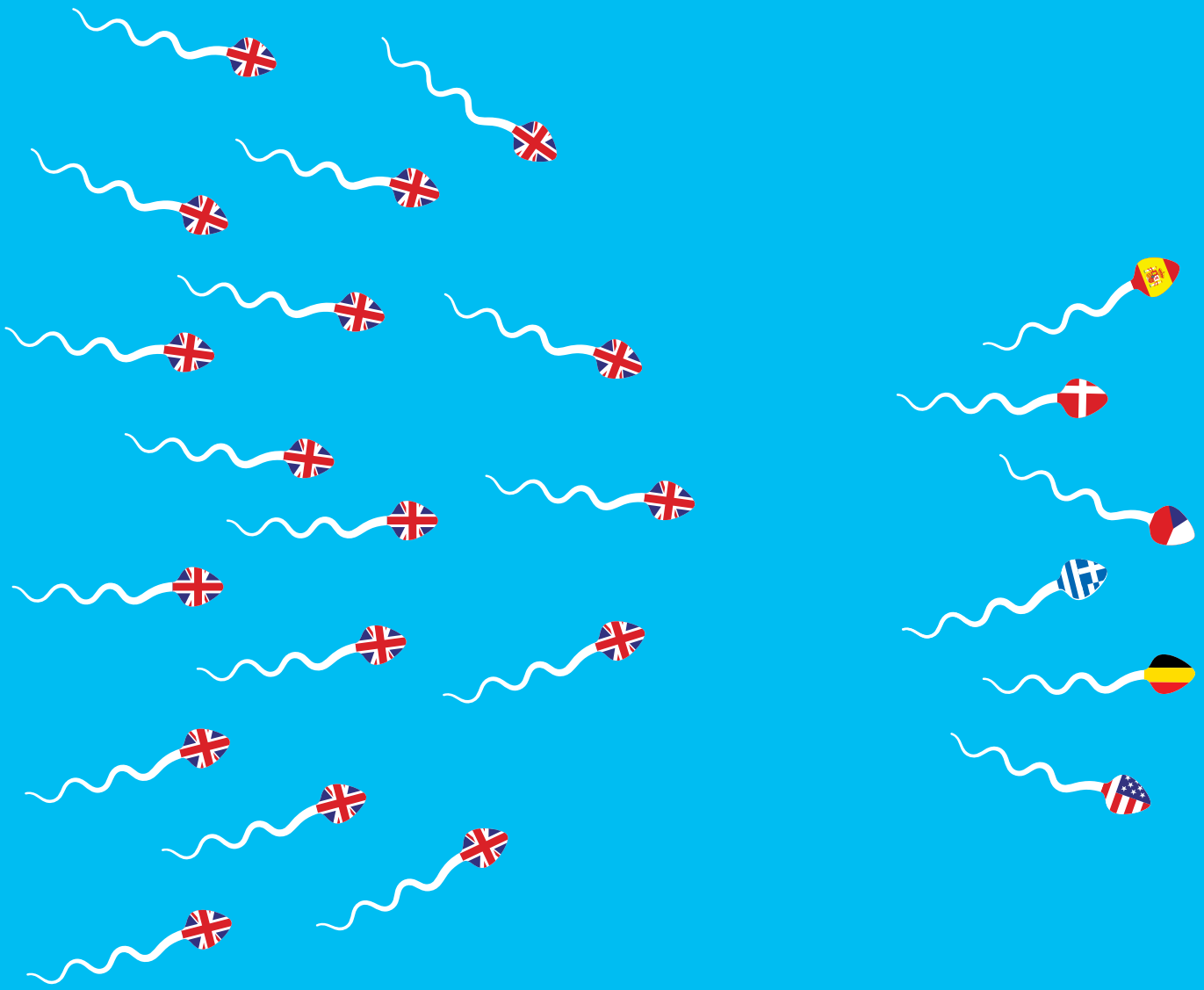
Since it started trading, Lily's Kitchen has grown from just Henrietta creating dog food recipes in her home kitchen to a team of 32 – plus numerous cat and dog tasters – with £20 million of retail sales. Despite this, says Henrietta, Lily's Kitchen still very much remains a local company, based in Hampstead, north London, where Lily enjoys her walks every day on the heath with Henrietta and her wife, Kim.

A pioneer with queer pedigree, Henrietta was also a co-founder of the UK's first British LGBT magazine website, Queercompany.com, in 1999 at the dawn of the dot com boom.

"I love being a disrupter," Henrietta admits. "I always have done; and the pet food industry had been dominated by some major conglomerates until we came along. It's great to be a game-changer and be really honest about what goes into our pet food."

Currently available nationwide in Waitrose and Ocado as well as in Wholefoods, the range is also on sale in vet surgeries, organic health food shops and pet shops and Tesco stores nationwide. Ⓓ

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Holiday hell



SUSAN CALMAN CAN JUST ABOUT TOLERATE A HOLIDAY, AS LONG AS IT'S NOT WITH HER FRIENDS

It's summer time (apparently). The few weeks, when I throw off my winter wardrobe of duffle coat and wool polo neck and throw on my summer wardrobe of linen duffle coat and cotton polo neck. The truth is, of course, that I've never really been that fond of the summer season. The heat, the excessive exposure of body parts and, most depressingly, the pressure to have fun with friends.

Of course I have friends, and not just ones on Facebook either. Proper friends, some of whom I've met on more than one occasion. But even though I am, and have always been, surrounded by lots of lovely people in my life, I've never, ever, been on holiday with any of them. One of those holidays you read about in magazines or see on BBC3, where 10 or so mates go abroad and drink lots and get up to highjinks. And I'd never really thought it was unusual until I was swapping holiday stories with a colleague recently. She was utterly horrified that I'd never experienced that bonding experience of painful sunburn and vomiting into a swimming pool.

If I'm honest, the main reason I've never had that brand of fun is, quite simply, that no one ever invited me. I don't write that to elicit sympathy (although feel free to make soothing noises while you're reading this), it's simply the truth. But why would such a gregarious, funny, charming woman (that's me, by the way) be excluded from this rite of passage experienced by so many? I think there are a number of reasons:

- In my 20s I was the only lesbian in my group of friends. Thinking back, I wonder if some of my mates thought I'd make them listen to me reading Orange Is Not The Only Fruit out loud round the swimming pool while they were trying to get laid.
- I organise too much. If you want a relaxed holiday, I'm not your woman. I suspect friends got the vibes that if I was to accompany them, they would get a laminated itinerary in the post the next morning. Apparently some people don't want that.
- I get up every morning at about 6am. It's a curse. I've never been able to sleep in. Apparently some people don't want that.
- I can only spend a maximum of one hour at a time in the sun before I get bored and need attention. Sunbathing is, to me, the most boring of all activities. I need regular outings. Mainly those specified on the laminated itinerary.
- I'm weird. I need to eat every four hours. I won't drink water out of jugs. I'm frightened of sandwiches if I haven't made them myself. I need to check the health and safety ratings of any accommodation. I can't go to the toilet if there's someone within hearing distance. Flip-flops make me feel sick. And so on, and so on, and so on.

It doesn't matter. I didn't want to go on holiday with other people anyway. I know that makes me sound awful but I like my friends, you see. I don't want to spend two weeks trapped in an apartment block with people I've previously liked, seething with resentment about the fact they didn't change the toilet roll when it ran out. My friends and I are suited to weekends away together, probably in the autumn, definitely in Scotland, where we can watch box sets of Doctor Who, drink some pink champagne and then go back to our own homes.

So what if I don't have war stories of surviving a fortnight of bonding! I have friends. In fact, some of them have lasted 20 years with me. And that definitely wouldn't have happened if we've gone away together. So, if my friends are reading this, keep not inviting me. I'm an awful person sometimes. And I'm happy that way. D

I've never bonded over sunburn and vomiting into a swimming pool

You can now buy the download of Susan Calman's first tour, Lady Like, from *SusanCalman.com*.
susan@divamag.co.uk

PHOTO STEVE ULLATHORNE, ILLUSTRATION FERNANDO SAFONT

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Festival lowlights



SARAH WESTWOOD FINALLY LOSES HER FESTIVAL VIRGINITY

Camping at a music festival is a rite of passage, but when the music's over I want to go home, have a nice cup of tea and climb into my own bed. I don't fancy the idea of existing exclusively on a diet of lager, chips and cremated cod fillets, older than Captain Bird's Eye himself. Nor do I want to queue for the privilege of squatting over four day old excrement; I only queue if there's the likelihood of heavily discounted Tom Dixon tea light holders at the end of it. But this year, when Fleetwood Mac announced they were closing the the Isle of Wight Festival, I decided it was time for my girlfriend and I to lose our festival virginity.

First up: equipment. My strategy was to pack light but luxuriously. I purchased a perky little two-woman pop-up tent. "Just unzip her and she's up in under a minute," said the store assistant. She was perfect: light, flexible and tight enough to bounce a penny off. The tent, on the other hand, would prove to be a massive let-down. I was also seduced into buying two luxury, five-tog, self-inflating airbeds, a couple of pop-up pillows at four pounds apiece (because you can put a price on comfort – it's £8), and a couple of matching blinding head-torches for late-night hands-free ablutions.

> Our pitch was close to the path to the Portaloos, but would that really matter?

After a long drive, a ferry, a taxi and a half-hour walk, we finally arrived on Sunday afternoon, just hours before the festival was to end. "You're late!" joked the blokes on the gate of our campsite, directing us to a patch of ruined earth that had just been vacated near the recycling pile. It was also close to the path to the Portaloos, I conceded, but would that really matter? Eager to get on with the festival experience, we popped her up, tossed our self-inflating airbeds in to do their thing and headed off into the throng.

As day turned into night and we drank beer, ate pizza and then fish and chips, washed down with a veggie burger and craft ale, and listened to Fleetwood Mac, I smiled. I imagined our mattresses continuing to self-inflate and getting nice and plump for our return. This was amazing. The light was beginning to fade beneath a blue sky, and the point of summer music events became crystal clear to me. I mean, it's a gig, yes, but you're there with thousands of like-minded souls, fellow travellers in this great adventure we call life. Sure, there's always that one annoying woman loudly boring on to her friend about her loft extension all the way through Landslide, then using her friend's leg to air guitar you in the coccyx to Go Your Own Way, but other than that mild inconvenience, it's all sublime oneness with your fellow man.

It's over all too soon, and we join the exodus back the camping area, bypassing the lines for kebabs and the tempting beats of Billy Ocean, narrowly escaping being swept out in the crowd heading for the exit, and stopping eventually for a nice cup of tea.

Back at the tent we discover a little flurry of disappointments. First up, my over-inflated idea about the comfort of our airbeds – they're flat as a board. Also, in our rush earlier we'd inadvertently pitched on a slight incline. Also, why are the airbeds not the length of an actual human being? Oh well, at least I'd be toasty in my Two Seasons sleeping bag. It wouldn't be the Four Seasons, but at least I'd be warm. Sadly, no. It was so thin I had to check that I hadn't accidently crawled into my girlfriend's sleeping bag sheath. Her bag, by comparison, was "almost too toasty", she complained.

As we zipped ourselves in for the night, we glanced skyward and witnessed Stevie Nicks' luxury Chinook evacuating her from the scene. The ground was hard and passing revellers kept insulting our tiny tent while a group next door (or is it next zip?) wept and argued through the night. All this meant I was only blessed with one hour's broken sleep, but no matter, at last I had popped my pop-up cherry. D

PHOTO LUCY POPE

ON HOW LIFE IS...

SIT BACK AND ENJOY THE RIDE AS GABE, YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURHOOD LESBIAN, NAVIGATES THE HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS OF LIFE.

YEAH... SHE MAY NEED A LITTLE HELP.





PERSON OF THE MONTH
LUCY BRONZE

If you didn't know the name Lucy Bronze before the Women's World Cup, you definitely know it now. The 23-year-old Manchester City right-back kicked her way into our hearts with a stunning goal from the edge of the box to beat Norway 2-1, sending England through to the last eight in the competition for the first time in their history. Following the game, Lucy said: "The more and more I watch it, I'm in disbelief that it was me that scored it. It's not a Lucy Bronze goal, I guess." It might not be a Lucy Bronze goal but it's definitely a Lucy Gold(en) goal, and you're an inspiration to us. Well done!

BOOMF

Personalised marshmallow innovators Boomf are at it again, this time with a range of "Coming Out" marshmallows, to make your grand entrance in the tastiest way possible.

These colourful creations include phrases like, "Hey I'm Gay", "I'm Coming Out" and "Straight is great but gay is the way", and are inspired by the original and unusual ways people have come out to their nearest and dearest.

Boomf has been crafting customised marshmallows since 2013, and these squishy treats come in a box of nine for £15 – including free postage anywhere in the world. Order yours now at *boomf.com* and save one for us!



PICK 'N' MIX

CELEBRITY TWEETS

@RubyRose
Woke up trending on Twitter and I haven't seen the show yet got me feeling reallllllll vulnerable right now! Hope you're all loving the show.

@CaseyStoney
Another big game, another big performance and a screamer by @LucyBronze. So proud of this @england team #FIFAWWC #Lionesses #Team

@metheridge
Practicing with the new selfie stick. Fancy.



@MsJackMonroe
Emojis that I get unreasonably upset about not having: Dragons | Penguins | Chefs hats | Curry | Peas | Carrots | All the deep thinking at 6am.

@thelizfeldman
Just got giddy excited when I found out the Indigo Girls have a new album coming out in case I forgot I was a lesbian for two seconds.

@lucyliz
I got to tour the set of The Fosters today so there's that. I may have fangirled. Maybe.

THIS MONTH WE LOVE...



TAYBERRY VINEGAR

Fancy re-booting your summer salads? Look no further than Tayberry Vinegar, sourced by two talented ladies in Fife (where the berries are almost as rare as the sun is in Scotland), the fruity berry is infused in wine vinegar with a little sugar and makes summer salads taste subtly sweeter. £1.90 *demijohn.co.uk*

POMMADE DIVINE

Dating back to the beginning of the 18th century, Pommade Divine was first developed by monks who knew a thing or two about the medicinal quality of herbs and it wasn't long before its virtues were being extolled by Marie Antoinette's great-grandma and latterly Sienna Miller. Now the creamy unguent – on sale exclusively at Liberty – has caught our eye, we're fans too. Good for all skin types and all manner of skin ailments, from stings, bites and blisters to sunburn, spots and chapped lips, this remedy balm will sooth and moisturise. £20 *pommadedivine.com*



A WORD FROM RUTH HUNT, CEO, STONEWALL

WE MUST STAND SIDE BY SIDE



Pride season is almost over.
At Pride In London this year, Stonewall marched with hundreds of young people. For many, it was their first Pride. Some were excited, some scared, others hoping to meet new friends.
It took me back to being 15 and realising I was a lesbian. The options to meet other women in 1995 were limited.
I went to one of the few gay bars in Cardiff, learnt to smoke and drink lager and (somewhat naively) thought everyone took me for an 18-year-old.
I didn't meet The One, though I really, really wanted to.
Going to Pride was beyond my wildest dreams. At Stonewall, we cover the costs so young people can attend, and keep them safe on the march.
While things have significantly changed in the last 20 years, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is still rife in our schools. Over 75,000 young people were bullied for being gay last year. And 21,000 of those attempted suicide.
And today, young women at school aren't just being bullied the old-fashioned way.
Smartphones and social media have enabled a cyberspace playground, meaning young people can be bullied wherever they are.
And it's got to end.
Young people are our future leaders. We must stand side by side in their fight to be accepted without exception, as previous generations did for us.
Support your local LGBT youth group. Order one of our packs and drop it in to your local primary or secondary school. Become a school governor. And, most importantly, show young women you're proud to be you. It'll make all the difference.

Free info service: *stonewall.org.uk/info*. *stoponlineabuse.org.uk*

WORDS CARRIE LYELL, PHOTO JULIA BAUER

DIVA: Can you tell us a bit about yourself
Diane Torr: I am an artist working in disciplines of performance, installation, photography and video.

You've made a name for yourself as a male impersonator. What is about drag that attracts you?
I enjoy the chance to perform various characters that enable me to investigate new behaviours. Here are a couple of examples. One character, "Mister EE" wears a black eye mask, white tuxedo jacket, blue velvet tie, a twinkling pinkie ring, dress shirt, dress socks, dress shoes and no trousers. When he sits down, his Y-pants are visible and so is the bump of his penis. "Mister EE" is a club act and he seduces and challenges the audience with his sly gaze. When he begins to lewdly dance to the loud intense techno music that is playing, he focuses on specific audience members to whom he directs his attract/repulse gesticulations. "Mister EE" is a man of a certain social standing and he is an enigma. Where/why/how/what are questions about him that are left to the audience's imagination. Performing as "Mister EE" allows me to discover and navigate the raunchy layers within. Performing in drag allows excess.
It's a challenge and a chance to test my control as a performer. Another character, "Danny King" represents a stereotype of male privilege. I wanted to know how to authentically perform acts of privilege and entitlement. This took many hours of study. Eventually, I could assimilate these behaviours so well that I was convincing in this particular drag persona, "Danny King". I could see in the audience's response that Danny King made them immediately sit up straight. But it's me, Diane, doing this. I wanted to call the bluff on male privilege – to never be intimidated by men in power because you know, as I do, that it's all a performance.

Why do you think it is so many queer people enjoy exploring concepts of masculinity and femininity in this way?
The realisation and understanding of gender as a construct and a performance can be acted upon in a queer space. With the possibility of suspension of judgement, comes the opportunity for new self-expression. The codes of behaviour – of the performance of "man"; of the performance of "woman" – that are adhered to in heteronormative land can be dispensed with and messed with. I know that many queer people don't feel they fit in and that's a good thing. No need to fret. In the process of becoming a self-actualised being, don't postpone joy!

Drag queens are very much in the public consciousness thanks to shows like RuPaul's Drag Race. Do you think their king counterparts will ever enjoy the same kind of attention?
RuPaul is one of a kind. I remember seeing him perform at Wigstock in Tompkin Square, in the East Village, NYC, in the 90s. He had the radiance of someone who truly believed in a dream, and he was talented and good-looking. I'm not surprised that his show has high popularity ratings. However, there is a fatuous element to glamour that makes it easy to like. Drag kings are different. They can be sexy and suave and turn women on, but they are not invested in the "join my fan club" kind of attention that drag queens emit. Living in a male-dominated society, women doing male impersonations are still considered iconoclastic, even in a subdued sense. Male impersonation often makes men feel uneasy and even if the parody is gracious, many have a sense of "their" territory being encroached upon. Within the queer scene, drag kings are enjoyed but there are still gay men who are not persuaded by them and clearly dislike the concept. Remember when Lady Gaga performed as her male character, "Jo Calderone"? She received a lot of negative criticisms from fans. The bottom line is that men are not comfortable with women performing as men.

What is Donald Does Dusty?
Donald Does Dusty is a one-woman performance of an hour's duration including text, music, projected imagery and a surprise element. My brother Donald was fascinated with the pop singer, Dusty Springfield. Growing up in Aberdeen in the 60s, he would regularly impersonate her. From a young age, Donald knew he was gay and he took power from knowing that "the normal rules don't apply" to him. I was a conspirator in his rebellion against heteronormativity. Donald Does Dusty pays homage to them both and draws upon Donald and Dusty's lives and careers. They shared a common heritage: both coming from lower-class backgrounds, both singers and performers, both desirous of fame and fortune and both closeted gays in a homophobic Britain. The performance raises issues of death and bereavement, and creates a new celebration space in which to celebrate the spirit of our loved ones who have passed on.

What can audiences expect?
They will be entertained, laugh a lot, be emotionally moved and have the possibility to drool over images of Dusty Springfield in all her mod glory. They may also learn something about Dusty's life that they didn't know before (yes – we all know she was gay – not that) and be transported to 1970 with BBC footage of The Young Generation exuberantly dancing without a hint of cynicism or self-consciousness. Plus, they will see me performing as myself, as my brother, as Dusty, and as my brother performing Dusty Springfield. Expect to be transformed.

Donald Does Dusty will run as part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival from August 17-30 (not August 25), 2015, at 7.35pm at The Red Lecture Theatre, Summerhall, Edinburgh. dianetorr.com

60 SECONDS WITH... DIANE TORR













"I spent all my savings to become a stuntwoman"

STUNT DOUBLE TIGER RUDGE SPENDS HER WORKING LIFE DICING WITH DANGER

AS TOLD TO
LOUISE CAROLIN

As a stunt performer, I've appeared in big Hollywood films like The Jungle Book (out next year) and Legend, the story of the Kray twins, released this summer. You won't recognise me though. The idea behind what we do is that we're never seen. We're the heroes behind the actors or the actresses when they do all this fancy stuff that makes people go, "Oh my god!" Having said that, I was in a Channel 4 reality show called The Audience as myself, and as a child actor I did Hollyoaks and Coronation Street.

I was a maniac as a child, but not in a bad way, my energy was controlled through being mischievous and adventurous. I left acting to study law but never finished my degree. After a spell travelling, I set up in business in my 20s, breaking young horses and selling them on.

Then the recession hit and people stopped buying horses. Having achieved quite a lot, quite young, I didn't know what to do. I didn't know what was going to make me happy any more. I went travelling, because I always travel when I'm a bit lost, and in New Zealand I met a girl from New York who was a film producer, and we just hit it off. We started dating and she encouraged me to take a course at the big stunt school in Seattle.

Stunt school was way more difficult than I expected. For some reason, I thought I could just turn up and be as good as these guys with five or 10 years' experience. I fell on my face but it was a good wake-up. I realised I had to practice what I was rubbish at.

By this time I was really sure I wanted to work in stunts. I'd also decided I wanted to live in America, so while I was waiting for my visa I trained to join the British Stunt Register. It's very difficult to get onto it; there are only 60 women in the world registered and that's the entirety, including people who might be retired, or pregnant.

Training takes a minimum of three years. I gave up my life to train full-time, going through all my savings, and was 28 when I qualified. From the categories fighting, falling, riding and driving, agility/strength and water, you choose six disciplines, with compulsory martial arts – at black belt level. When you get offered a job, you could be asked to do any one of these things, so you need to be prepared.

My background as a child gymnast meant that straight away I could do a lot, and I took the horse qualification, so I had that advantage, too. High diving was the hardest for me; I took so many hits. You dive from Olympic-height boards. When you hit the water from that height, you're going at about 28 mph, so anything that goes wrong is massively exaggerated. I eventually got there and it was an amazing feeling when I did.

I recently stunt-doubled for an episode of the TV show Casualty, which is due to air any day now. It was quite a difficult stunt using precision driving skills – the end result being that the go-kart flips over... At times like these your nerves and adrenaline are sky-high, with all cameras and eyes on you. For that moment, you are the star, not the actors, and I enjoy that pressure. That's when I perform best.

Actors often say they did their own stunts but it's almost impossible because when you make a film there are almost always two units running: actors and stunts. They film at the same time in different places and blend them together in the edit. But you do get some actors that are incredible. Tom Cruise trained as a stuntman before he was an actor and he does a lot of his own stunts, as do Brad Pitt and Harrison Ford. But if an actor like Brad Pitt rolls his ankle and everyone's on standby for two months, imagine how much that costs.

There's a bit of a misconception – people think daredevil people do stunts, but if you take pride in what you do, you're very, very cautious because you don't want to be replaced. If you're off work, you're not getting paid, and as soon as someone knows you've broken your leg, they're thinking that you'll never have that functionality again. You have to be hush-hush when you hurt yourself. I've known stuntmen say they're on a job rather than admit to an injury. But I've been quite lucky.

It can be a great wage but then you may not work for four or five months so you've got to be very good at managing your money, and it's one of those industries where you've got to be fit and ready to work all the time. It's not too bad for men because they want them to be big and bulky, but with women they want them tiny and delicate. I've been fit as an athlete all my life so I've retained muscle; I've never been stick thin. I think it goes in my favour; when you're bouncing off cars you need that extra layer, you don't want to be breaking your ribs. But you're doubling skinny actresses and if you're not prepared to look like them then you might lose the job to someone who is. I think that's the thing I've struggled with most, to be honest.

I'm independent and I quite like my own company, but this job is hard on relationships. I just split up from someone who had just as busy a lifestyle as me, she's the world number one female boxer so she's travelling all over the place, and it was crazy but she understood the demands of my life. When we were together, we appreciated the fact that we had time off.

I hate labels but I'd say I'm bisexual because I've been in relationships with men and women and both sexes have meant equally to me. I've felt that way since I was very young. The thing that bothers me is that you have to say you're something. I don't like boxes. I'm definitely a petrolhead in the sense that I'm terrible with things that are static. Culture is wasted on me. When I'm holiday with a friend they'll want to take in the sights but I'll just see a tourist trap, a picture everyone else has got on their Facebook. I'd rather hire a speedboat and go to an island with a cool-box full of cocktails and some music, and we'll have a party. For me that's fun.

tigerstuntz.com

I'm a daredevil but I'm also cautious. I'm proud of my work

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WHY EVERYTHING'S CHANGING IN THE LADY GARDEN (AND OTHER PARTS OF OUR BODIES)

WORDS EFFI MAI

HAIR today?

The world is changing bit by bit and we're rejecting binary gender and heteronormative beauty norms more and more. Getting rid of your body hair has been a topic that has been vastly debated, from women saying they do it to feel cleaner, to others having arm-hair-growing contests with their friends. The whole world is telling us we should get rid, but what about why you shouldn't?

IT TAKES FOREVER. Someone, somehow, has worked out that for the average woman shaving takes 72 whole days out of their lifetime. That's almost as much time as you'd need to travel around the world. You could learn Italian, or how to make sushi, or watch Orange Is The New Black 89 times in the time it takes you to you faff about with pink razors.

AND THEN IT'S JUST GOING TO GROW BACK. And worse. It's like a lawn. At first, it was just grass. And then you mow it, and suddenly there's weeds and dandelions coming up. It's also uncomfortable and itchy when it grows back, and all spiky-feeling like a cactus or a teenage boy's gelled-up fringe. And for some reason you can't stop poking it.

IT'S PAINFUL. You have never heard anyone talk about how lovely it is to get a wax. It feels like your legs are being attacked by an army of small knives. Even the girls smiling on the advert have to have ice baths afterwards, and a very large cheque. And with shaving, how many of us have gone off in a daydream in the shower about Alex Vause holding that pink razor, and cut ourselves in the most awkward of places.

HAIR IS THERE FOR A REASON. It protects you against bacteria and all sorts of nasty business, and removing it can leave micro tears in your skin that can make you more susceptible to infections. Also, ingrowing hairs happen easily and it's not so much fun having nasty red whiteheads down there because it gives the term popping your cherry a whole other disgusting meaning.

NO ONE CARES. Nobody who really matters is going to dump you or walk away from getting jiggy with it if they feel a bit of hair on you. And you'll never time it right anyway. The day you want to show off your smoothness you'll forget to do it, and the day you do, you'll end up in jeans or a morphsuit.

THE COST. We're already paying luxury tax on tampons, and hair removal stuff is no different. Men's razors are necessary and come in packs of 20. Women's razors need to be pink and make you smell like apricots or pinecones. They also come in packs of one that cost about the size of a large pizza and a bottle of wine.

MEN GET TO BE HAIRY. We should get to, too. Porn, of course, hugely influences what people think women should look like. The men have hair and the women are bald. So we think we should also be that way. There is huge pressure on women to look a certain way in order to please men. The first thing the Little Mermaid probably did when she got legs and a vagina was shave.

IT'S NOT A MASCULINE THING. Ros Brunwin, who has a degree in gender studies, believes pubic hair is very feminine and womanly. She states that, "Basically, the female body has become this public site of politics and policing and we are pulled in every which direction to conform to unnatural standards of beauty – and pubic hair is one of those standards. Shaving is no fun, you get a shaving rash and vaginas are super sensitive and need to be treated with love and care and all our pubic hair grows there to protect them".

And so the lesbians are stopping. More gay girls are willing to embrace that hair on bodies is natural and there's no need to put ourselves through the hell. We have enough to cope with already compared to men, what with having vaginas in the first place and dealing with Satan's waterfall of death every month.

If you shave or get rid of hair because you want to for your own reasons, that's wonderful. But if you're doing it to fit in with these so-called beauty standards, and you hate it, then let your hair grow and be free, plait it or sprinkle it with glitter. But fling that pink razor away. D

More gay girls are willing to embrace the hair on bodies as natural

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11 **NEWCASTLE** Cumberland Arms
16 **LOWDHAM** Old Ship Inn
19 **OTLEY** Folk Festival*
25 **BURTON-UPON-TRENT** The Brewhouse
26 **BOGNOR REGIS** Southdowns Folk Festival*
27 **EVESHAM** Bretforton Fleece Inn

* Normal O&T show

OCTOBER

01 **CARDIGAN** Cellar Bar
02 **BARRY** West End Club
03 **SWANSEA** Chattery
04 **FROME** Cooper Hall*
05 **SUDBURY** Edwardstone White Horse Inn
06 **HARWICH** Samuel Pepys
07 **ALDEBURGH** Folk East @ Pump House
08 **CROYDON** Oval Tavern
09 **HASTINGS** Electric Palace Cinema
11 **CHESTER** Fringe Festival @ St Mary's Centre*
12 **SKIPTON** Folk Unplugged @ Narrow Boat
16 **YORK** Thorganby Village Hall
17 **HEBDEN BRIDGE** Wadsworth Community Centre
18 **WHITBY** Musicport Festival
23 **DOBCROSS** The Swan
24 **SALFORD** Eccles Town Hall*
25 **SHEFFIELD** Shakespeares
26 **LONDON** Nunhead Ivy House

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MUSIC

ESSENTIAL SOLO ARTISTS

WILLIS EARL BEAL

Noctunes (Tender Loving Empire)

One of this generation's true mavericks, Willis Earl Beal's new album finds him abandoning the DIY aesthetic of his XL recordings for lush, minimalist symphonies. Survive and Like A Box both feature shuffling beats but the rest of Noctunes captures him crooning soulfully over slow, shimmering synths and meditative, Badalamenti style FX. A revelation.

HINDI ZAHRA

Homeland (Parlaphone)

Five years after her debut, Homemade, Moroccan singer Hindi Zahara returns with her enchanting second album. A seductive affair, it switches effortlessly from cool jazz, pop and flamenco to desert blues. All the songs are led by Hindi's hypnotic vocals and brooding percussion but it's Cabo Berde that's the most spellbinding.

DOWNLOAD THIS

JAMIE XX

In Colour (XL)

Jamie XX demonstrates why he's one of the most talented young producers around with his ace solo debut. Gosh, Girl and Noise pay homage to vintage jungle and rave with fast beats and basslines, whilst his XX bandmates add their distinctive vocals to dreamy, synth-pop gems Loud Places, See Saw and Stranger.

IF YOU LIKE FOLK

HOLLY LERSKI

The Wooden House (The Laundry Label)

A perfectly-crafted folk album, Wooden House features 10 songs that showcase Holly Lerski's warm voice, gently strummed guitar and incredibly catchy melodies. Inkblot and Happy Sad venture into lovelorn territory, whilst Oh Atoms and Pudding Pie are more playful, Americana numbers with cute lyrics and banjo. Go listen.



Gwenno: blissful pop gems

GWENNO

Y Dydd Olaf (Heavenly Recordings)

Gwenno Saunders' debut solo album offers a myriad of treasures. For Broadcast and Stereolab fans, it's a collection of 10 blissful pop gems. For Krautrock and Goldfrapp lovers, it's a kaleidoscope of cool synths, loops and electronic melodies. For sci-fi fanatics, it's an ambitious concept album inspired by Owain Owain's cult dystopian novel. For us, it's simply one of the most magical, mysterious and beguiling albums of 2015.



FLORENCE AND THE MACHINE

How Big, How Blue, How Beautiful (Island)

Florence's third album is another glorious collection of melodramatic pop songs. Think anthemic choruses, giant hooks, epic drums and swelling brass arrangements all bubbling underneath Florence's defiant, distinctive vocals. There are moments of quiet introspection but these are nestled between euphoric stompers like Ship, Delilah and Queen of Peace.



LADY LAMB

After (Mom & Pop)

Like Courtney Barnett, American songstress Lady Lamb composes cathartic pop songs that chronicle the minutiae of everyday life from love and death to abandoned buildings. Some songs focus simply on shuffling guitar, and drums but the majority are more playful affairs that feature her singing over rousing guitar riffs and raucous instrumentation.



ROSEAU

New Glass

Big Dada's Roseau layers moody beats, eerie FX and distinctive chants over cool, multicoloured synths on this ace new track.



EVES THE BEHAVIOR

TV (Warpaint Remix)

LA's Warpaint transform ETB's TV into a slow-building, floor filler with ghostly percussion, shuffling beats and dreamy, distorted vocals.



LARKIN POE

Stubborn Love

Atlanta duo Larkin Poe fuse roots rock with feel-good pop on this breezy single led by elegant vocal harmonies.

3 BEST TRACKS

WORDS SARAH-JANE ROBERTS, PHOTOS SHERVIN LAINEZ

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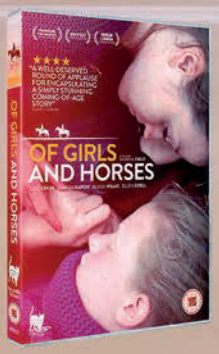
OF GIRLS AND HORSES

★★★★

"A well-deserved round of applause for encapsulating a simply stunning coming-of-age story"
Planet London

"Beautiful and gently provocative"
Lucy Peters, DIVA Magazine

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Quote reference DIVA

FILM & ONLINE

52 TUESDAYS
Dir Sophie Hyde



Transition and movie-making are both more complicated than they need to be in this baggy film about personal growth. When James (Del Herbert-Jane) comes out to daughter Billie (Tilda Cobham-Hervey) as a transgender man, he tells her that apart from brief weekly visits, she must live with her other parent for a year. Never properly explained, this decision reflects the film's mysteriously negative take on trans* issues; with James as a parent, the theatrically gamine Billie rapidly goes off the rails. A subplot about her own voyeuristic investigation into sexuality and gender is interesting but equally joyless.
In cinemas 7 August

GEMMA BOVERY
Dir Anne Fontaine



Gemma Arterton now seems to be the go-to girl for adaptations of Posy Simmons' entertaining graphic novels. She's right on the money as an English rose in the French countryside, as Anne Fontaine wrings all possible charms – freshly baked bread, adorable dogs, hot extramarital sex – from either side of the Channel. Even Martin Joubert (Fabrice Luchini), Gemma Bovery's obsessively interested neighbour, remains charming rather than creepy. However, the sexy whimsy comes to an end with the book's bleak twist, after which the film has to speed towards the finish line before its audience realises exactly how depressed they now are.
In cinemas 21 August



Amy Schumer delivers sly laughs aplenty in Trainwreck

TRAINWRECK
Dir Judd Apatow

We all know Hollywood has a bit of a girl problem. If I see another movie matching beer-swilling, sex-obsessed dudes with unfeasibly beautiful and charming women, I'm going to hurl my pint at the screen. Luckily, Hollywood now has an even bigger girl problem in the shape of comedian Amy Schumer, whose new rom com portrays its leading lady like an obnoxious movie dude, while her boyfriend has the unrealistic body and empty head of your typical minor female character. Written by Amy, Trainwreck offers sly laughs aplenty and a kinder, more forgiving approach to on-screen romance – plus a hilariously unrecognisable Tilda Swinton.
In cinemas 15 August

HORRIFYING ROMANCE
ALICE + FREDA
In 1892, the crimes of a teenage lesbian murderess shocked America. Now the tragic story of Alice Mitchell and Freda Ward is the subject of an upcoming film, based on the non-fiction book by Alexis Coe. Directed by Jennifer Kent, the woman behind The Babadook, this is definitely one to watch out for.
Alice and Freda Forever by Alexis Coe is published by Pulp/Zest.

QUEER EROTIC THRILLER
SNAPSHOT
Shine Louise Houston has been making award-winning lesbian porn for almost a decade, offering a smarter, sexier alternative to mainstream smut. Now she's using an Indiegogo campaign to create her first completely independent feature. Keep an eye out for Snapshot, an erotic suspense thriller starring queer women of colour, in 2016.
Find out more at *snapshotthefilm.com*.

MARRIAGE DOCUMENTARY
LEI DISSE SÌ
Ingrid and Lorenza want to get married, but this is not an option for same-sex couples in Italy. Luckily, Ingrid's family is from Sweden... This lo-fi documentary, directed by Maria Pecchioli, is an unexpectedly moving account of their marital roadtrip, accompanied by loving friends, family, and a boat-loving Swedish wedding officiant.
Find out more at *leidissesi.net/en*.

ONLINE

TRAVEL
THE LESBIAN AND GAY TRAVEL GUIDE
Thinking of going away for a bit of last minute sun? You just choose your destination and Damron tells you where all the best LGBT friendly restaurants, bars, clubs and accommodations are.
damron.com

PETS
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Love dogs but can't own one? With this app you can borrow someone's dog for the day, night or even the weekend, allowing the owner to have a break or go to work commitments. Guaranteed cuteness overload.
borrowmydoggy.com

MUSIC
WOLF ALICE
Check out our new favourite alternative rock band – Wolf Alice. The band have just released their upcoming tour dates and the new album came out in June. Catch Wolf Alice hitting up London in September.
soundcloud.com/wolfalice

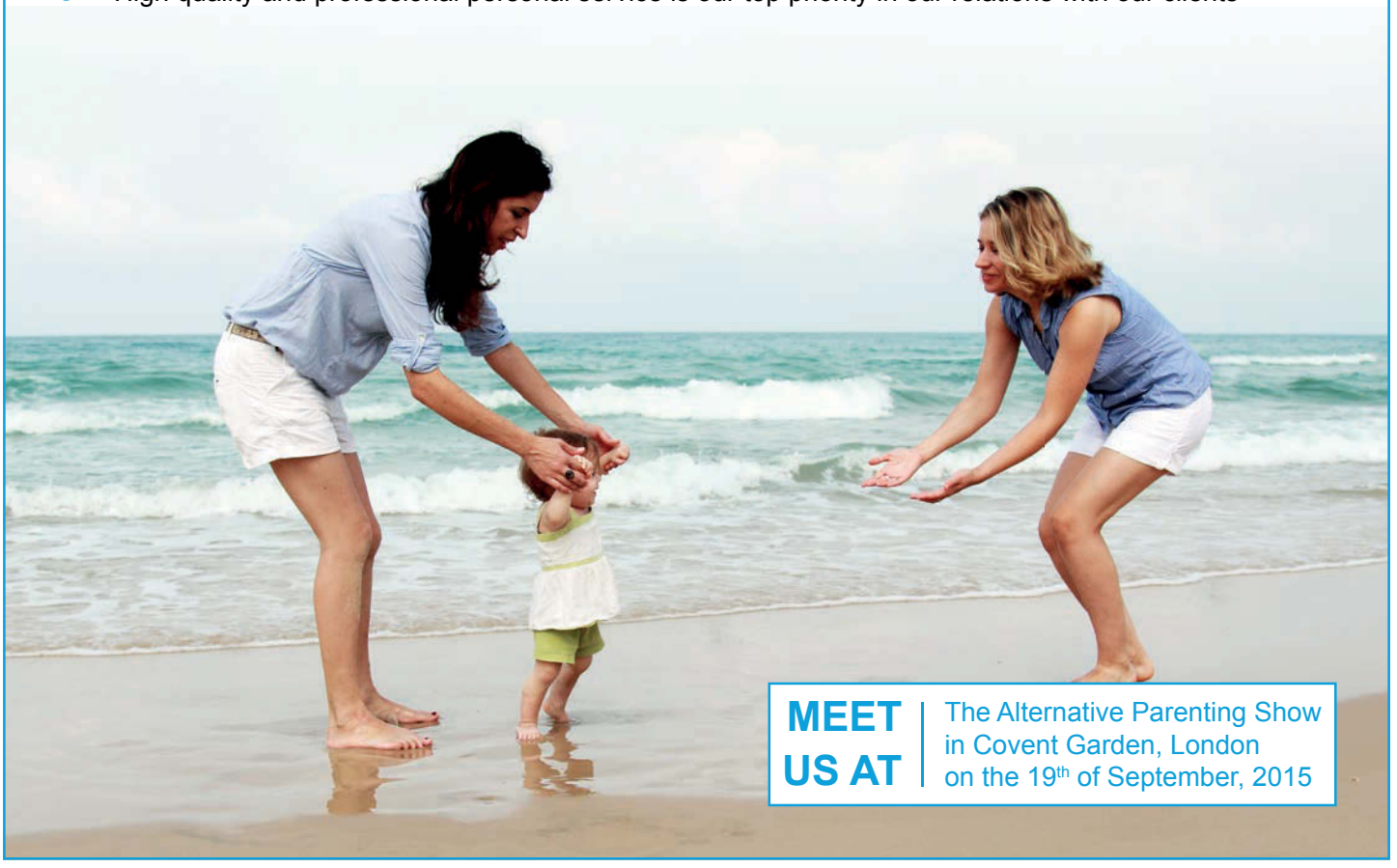
WORDS LUCY PETERS (FILM), ANISA EASTERBROOK (ONLINE), PHOTOS JEROME PREBOIS, UNIVERSAL PICTURES

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TELEVISION

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If you missed Paul Abbott's (Shameless) brilliant cop series on Channel 4 earlier this year, never fear, because all eight episodes are out on DVD from 10 August.

ON THE WEB
OUT



After a successful Kickstarter campaign, there's a brand new web series on the block and you're going to love it. Out stars Jessica Arden as Sammy, a seemingly unremarkable teenage girl whose life is thrown upside down when she meets Jenny (Megan Simpson). Out is quirky, infectious and cute.
Watch now on YouTube

ON OUR RADAR
SCREAM



Remember Wes Craven's slasher franchise, Scream? You know, the one with the scary mask, where everyone died? It's back. Adapted for MTV, as well as being gloriously gory, it's a bit queer as well. Bex Taylor-Klaus (The Killing) plays Audrey Jenson, a questioning high school student caught making out with a girl. It's only in the US at the moment, but expect it to move over the pond later this year if it does well in the ratings.



Comic relief: Tig Notaro tells her own story in Tig

PICK OF THE MONTH

TIG

2012 was a devastating year for Grammy-nominated comedian Tig Notaro. Having just recovered from a life-threatening infection and still in mourning over her mother's sudden death, Notaro discovered she had bilateral breast cancer. She was left with no choice but to find the funny side and turn her profound pain into a punchline, both on and off the stage. "During that stretch, it was just one thing after another, in such a small window of time, that it became laughable to me," she says. This new Netflix original tells the incredible and inspirational story of her search and discovery of humour and love amid this devastating news.
Netflix, 17 July



WHAT WE'RE WATCHING
PARKS AND RECREATION

Now in its seventh season, Parks And Recreation has been a massive cult success Stateside. Over here, it's not as well known, and we're a bit behind, with the third season only airing last year. Worry not, Knope fans, because the fourth instalment is coming to Dave and we're super excited. No idea what we're talking about? Catch up with the first three seasons on Amazon Prime.
Season 4, Dave, 27 July, 8pm



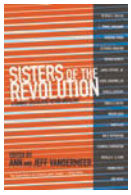
WE CAN'T WAIT FOR
THE STRAIN

Guillermo del Toro's gruesome horror series is back for a second season, and it's scarier than ever. Based on the bestselling trilogy about a vampire virus that breaks out in New York City, you might want to watch this one from behind the sofa. But make sure to peak out now and again or you'll miss Ruta Gedmintas – best known as Lip Service heartthrob Frankie – who plays Dutch Velders.
FX, Sundays, 10pm

WORDS CARRIE LYELL, PHOTOS NETFLIX, FX NETWORKS, NBC UNIVERSAL, CHANNEL 4/RORY MULVEY & RYANMCNAMARA,


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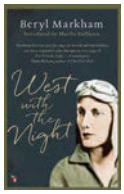
SPECULATIVE FICTION

SISTERS OF THE REVOLUTION

Eds Ann and Jeff VanderMeer

Motherhood, sex, gender, free speech, incarceration and independence are just some of the themes explored in this terrific anthology of feminist speculative fiction containing 29 fantastic and surreal science-fiction stories written over the last half century. Varied, weird and otherworldly.

PM Press, £11.99



ADVENTURE / MEMOIR

WEST WITH THE NIGHT

Beryl Markham

First published in 1942, pioneering racehorse trainer, aviator and society beauty Beryl Markham's memoir tells of an amazing, unconventional life. It's a story of a remarkable childhood in Africa, gleaming horses, and silent night flights, told by a woman whose eyes were "filled with clouds". Hemingway loved it.

Virago, £9.99



JOURNAL

MY AMAZING FAMILY AND ME

Jesse Toksvig-Stewart and Kat Willott

A cute illustrated hardback record book designed for alternative, same-sex and adoptive families who want to document their child's earliest years.

Ugly Duck Books, £15.99



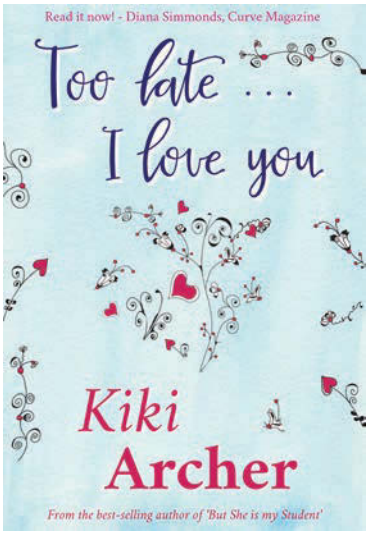
HISTORICAL FICTION

THE PETTICOAT MEN

Barbara Ewing

This well researched novel is inspired by the true story of two Victorian men, Freddie and Ernest. Lodgers of supportive narrator Mattie, their glamorous gown-wearing alter egos Fanny and Stella lead to their arrests and a trial.

Head of Zeus, £7.99



ROMANCE

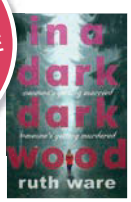
TOO LATE... I LOVE YOU

Kiki Archer

Stay-at-home mum and fledgling author Connie Parker isn't happy. She loves toddler Noah but things aren't going well with overworked husband Karl, and during their catty coffee meetings, gay best friend Ryan is doing his best to push her into finding someone new. Enter a woman who in real life would be too good to be true: single, hot lesbian mum Maria, a wealthy, generous café owner who is immediately drawn to frazzled, awkward Connie, a newcomer to same-sex attraction. Archer's will they won't they storyline has its share of slightly far-fetched moments but it's an enjoyable and frequently funny read, peppered with maddening, meddling mothers-in-law, pandering Italian aunts, shrieking toddlers, a posse of playgroup lesbian mums, and a memorable sex toy shopping spree. Great at capturing the giddy, slightly crazed uncertainty of new desire, as well as the exhausting nature of energetic pre-schoolers, Too Late... I Love You is already proving to be another well-deserved hit for the bestselling author of But She Is My Student and Binding Devotion.

KA Books, £9.99, ebook £3.49

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THRILLER

IN A DARK, DARK WOOD

Ruth Ware

Reluctant guests at an isolated house for estranged friend Clare's hen weekend, Nora and gay best friend Nina meet Clare's doting, controlling new BFF Flo. Then someone's murdered and Nora finds herself in hospital struggling to remember events in this pacey, twisty whodunit.

Harvill Secker, £12.99



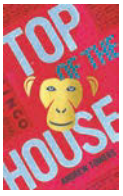
YOUNG ADULT FICTION

THE DARK LIGHT

Julia Bell

Cynical foster kid Alex finds herself placed within a strict, sexist religious community where she meets Rebekah, who has never known anything different. A growing connection between the girls has terrible repercussions in this dark coming-of-age tale from Bell, a creative writing lecturer at Birkbeck.

MacMillan, £6.99



COMIC FICTION

TOP OF THE HOUSE

Andrew Towers

Trans writer Andrew Towers' first novel is a comical caper set in the North East, in which financially strapped transvestite Maurice and ex-girlfriend Divvy Karen plot to steal a bingo hall's grand prize. Complications, including Karen's antagonistic ex, drug dealer Chunky, run riot in this confident debut.

Corsair, £14.99

WORDS EDEN CARTER WOOD



Great drama let down by its bi representation: "former lesbian" Piper *(right)* and girlfriend Alex in Orange Is The New Black

DIVA ADDITIONAL DIGITAL CONTENT

More information on p5
divadigital.co.uk

Bye-bye, bi TV

WHY ARE BI WOMEN SO POORLY REPRESENTED IN BRITISH TV? JACQUIE LAWRENCE GOES BEHIND THE SCENES TO FIND OUT

Once upon a time Channel 4 had a specific budget and space in the schedule for LGBT programming such as Dyke TV, Queer Street, Coming Out Night and Out. Hard to believe now, perhaps. I was awarded the enviable moniker of Filth Pedlar Of Channel 4 by the Daily Mail for my perceived contributions to the cause. For five years I commissioned hundreds of hours of lesbian and gay programming and, to my shame, only one hour of these was dedicated purely to bisexuality. To add to this mea culpa, it was a programme entitled Greed as one part of a series that reclaimed the Seven Deadly Sins. To be fair to the then-pedlar of filth, it was a polemical series and the bisexual protagonists did a great job of persuading over a million viewers then that bisexuality was a legitimate sexual preference and lifestyle.

The last C4 project I commissioned was Rikki Beadle-Blair's drama series, Metrosexuality, which featured a cast covering a full range of sexual choices – in all their complexity and glory – including bisexuality. This was, however, a rare flash of positive representation and so, just over 15 years later, I wondered if bisexuality was faring any better in television drama. And, as an Americanist, I thought it both a challenge and pertinent to consider bisexual representation on both sides of the Atlantic.

According to GLAAD's annual Where We Are On TV report, the number of bisexual women on both American cable and network drama has risen steadily in the last three years, from 16 in the 2012-2013 season to 31 in the 2014-2015 season. That is 31 recognisably bisexual female characters in drama series, all of which are huge hits.

We're talking the gamut of genres here, from medical dramas such as Grey's Anatomy and Nurse Jackie, to criminal and legal series like Bones and The Good Wife, to the musical drama Glee and the vampire drama True Blood. Shall I go on? Thankfully, we have television acquisition executives with the critical faculties to buy up these shows for UK channels, otherwise we'd be feasting on the dry bones of the UK's current lean pickings of bisexual-themed drama.

There is no audit of UK bisexual representation because Stonewall does not yet have a focused method of quantification. However, in 2006 it did report that bisexuals were not only underrepresented on British television but that a focus group had found zero examples of bisexuality in the 168 hours of television that were monitored for its subsequent report, Tuned Out.

In 2010, the BBC was forced to acknowledge that bisexuals were the least-represented sexual group on its channels, after lesbians, and that the portrayals "tended to focus, in the main, on bisexual behaviour rather than being bisexual as an identity" and that "this tended to confirm preconceptions about bisexual sexual orientation as being experimental or just being about extremely promiscu-

PHOTOS JOJO WHILDEN/NETFLIX, BBC/NICKY JOHNSTON, SHOWTIME

ous behaviour, which was resented".

Just how hard is it to assimilate bisexual women into television drama? American drama writers seem to have found a way, with characters like the superbly unambiguously bisexual Kalinda in The Good Wife, whose interest in women isn't an add-on to her characterisation; rather it is a significant part of it.

Karin Young, writer on ITV's soap Emmerdale, told me, "At the writing table we rarely talk about characters as bisexual. For all the characters over the years who may have arrived and said, 'My name's So-and-so and I'm gay', we've never had a person pitch up and say, 'Hi, I'm my name's So-and-so and I'm bi'. I can't think of any soap character who has been defined as bi from the off".

My opinion is that there is a more contentious reason why we see fewer bisexual women on television. This may be because lesbian viewers have claimed them as "lesbian" when in actual fact they should be identified as bisexual. I may well incur the wrath of the lesbian readership but I think that we may have duped ourselves into believing that a UK favourite lesbian couple, Last Tango In Halifax's Caroline and Kate, were actually a lesbian couple at all.

As far as I can see, Kate wasn't a lesbian. At no point in the series did she ever say she was, unlike Caroline, who did and had the backstory to prove it. She came out at Oxford and her mother imploded, so she went back in. She endured a sham marriage to the feckless John and it was only her career that was her great love. When she hooked up with Kate, she came out all over again. So what of Kate's backstory? We discovered little about her, other than that she was married to Richard. We don't know why the marriage ended. She chose to get pregnant by sleeping with a man, rather than through IVF. Everything Kate does is in reaction, or dependent on the actions of Caroline. She is a *bisexual cipher*. There, I've said it! As a character, she had a role (bringing Caroline out of the closet) and once that role had been fulfilled then she had to go. She would never have left Caroline of her own accord, so, rather miserably, she had to die. Perhaps her character, like most bisexuals in UK drama, just wasn't rounded enough to sustain that section of the narrative. Kate's sexuality had been erased well before she was killed. It was death by bisexual erasure, not by road accident.

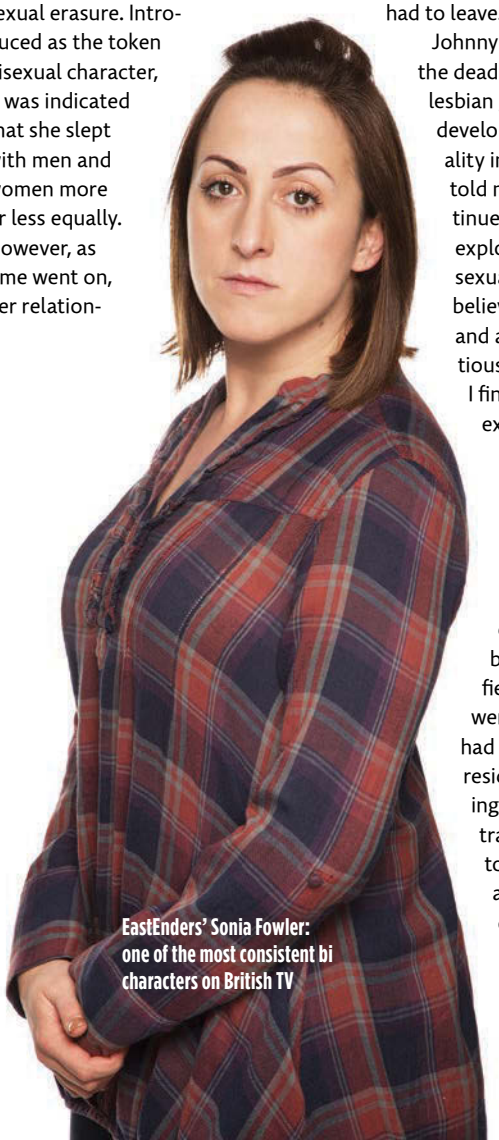
Have any other bisexual characters been erased by lesbian reclamation, I wondered. What about Alice and Jenny in The L Word, both of whom started out as strident bisexuals in season one?

Kathy Greenberg, one of the original creators of The L Word, tells me that casting Jenny as bisexual was actually the network's idea. She says: "It was Showtime who thought that was a better way to do the pilot, maybe because it had a more accessible way in? And of course, a much more dramatic entree for a main character to come into the world without any knowledge of gay culture."

This revelation proves insightful, especially when Jenny's bisexuality is slowly eroded during the show's narrative arc. According the website TV Tropes, "since she's a depraved lesbian she doesn't really do much to lift the show's attitude toward bisexuals".

Alice is also a victim of bisexual erasure. Introduced as the token bisexual character, it was indicated that she slept with men and women more or less equally. However, as time went on, her relationships with men were given increasingly little screen-time, and were eventually phased out entirely.

> "Ideally, in soaps, everyone would be bisexual and would have sex with as many people as possible"



EastEnders' Sonia Fowler: one of the most consistent bi characters on British TV

Even Orange Is The New Black is guilty of bisexual erasure. According to cultural commentator Casey Quinlan, bisexual Piper has in one sense rescued the visibility of bisexual characters, who mostly languish in the background; but the show's treatment is arguably more problematic. She is only ever referred to as a "former lesbian". No wonder bisexual viewers are incensed.

There is nothing wrong with a bisexual character evolving into a lesbian but it does happen on an irritatingly regular basis. Is this because bisexual characters are hard to develop? Lip Service creator Harriet Braun has a valid and salient reason as to why Frankie's bisexuality was minimal: " I wanted to show a bisexual woman whose main focus was women and that men were a sideline. I liked playing with this stereotype because biphobia does annoy me." It is a shame though that the show's only bisexual had to leave.

Johnny Capps, who subverted the dead lesbian trope to create a lesbian ghost in Hex, would have developed Sugar's inherent sexuality in the show, Sugar Rush. He told me: "If the show had continued, I would have definitely explored Kim and Sugar in a sexual relationship. I genuinely believe that people are bisexual and as it's a potentially contentious subject in the 'gay world', I find it a fascinating area to explore in drama."

My own audit of British television suggests that the most consistent purveyors of bisexual women are the traditional soaps. But does quantity deliver quality? At one time, soap bisexuals were not identified as such, rather they were straight women who had one-off flings with the resident lesbian before reverting back to men. They were transient characters used to garner viewing figures and to create plot-driven obstacles for straight men to overcome.

Karin Young concedes ▶

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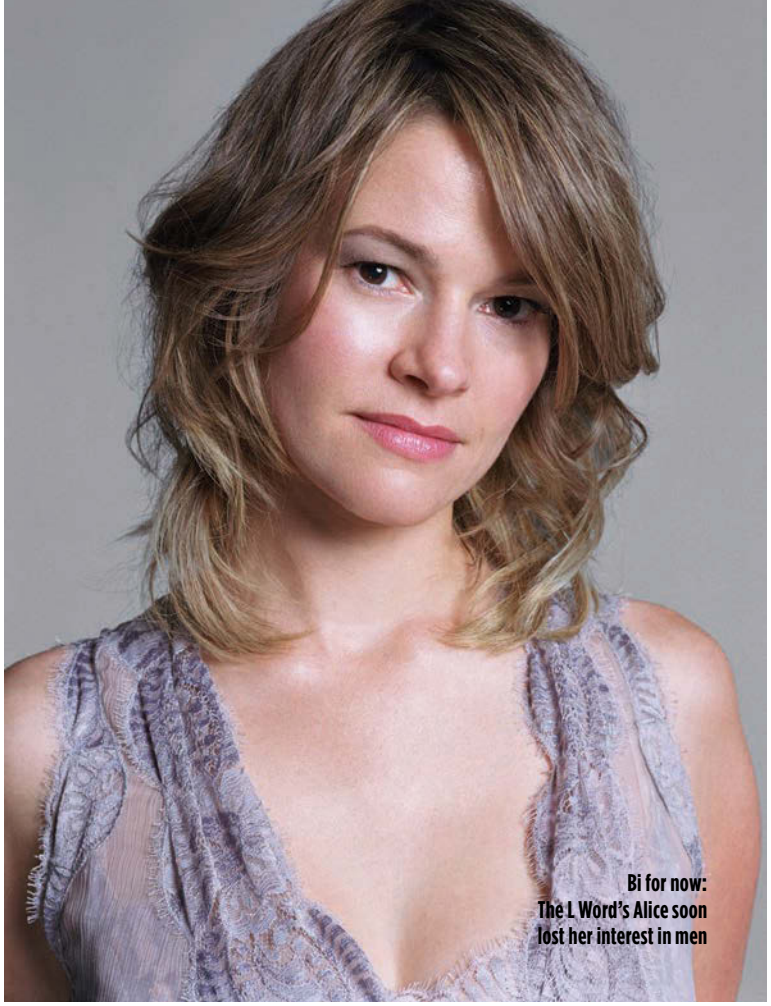
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Bi for now: The L Word's Alice soon lost her interest in men

that, at times, writers and producers "don't necessarily deal with honest depictions of bi – or any – sexuality. We often settle on something more convenient for a story than a truthfully character-driven narrative".

But are "soap bisexuals" becoming more sophisticated? BBC1 controller Charlotte Moore points out that Sonia Fowler is one of the most consistent bi characters on British television, having first had an encounter with another woman way back in 2005: "We have an on-going story in EastEnders which involves characters Tina and Sonia. Viewers know that Tina is a lesbian and that Sonia has had 'experiences' with women. These characters live together and are in a relationship together since Sonia split from her husband, Martin".

I asked Karin Young about the Emmerdale character Charity Dingle, who I have had a screen crush on since the late 1990s. She agrees that "Charity's the only character, in my opinion, who would give any man or woman the once over in a 'would I or would I not' way, when she walks into the pub. She's a rule-breaking, vivacious, attractive woman who reacts in the moment, for pleasure as well as gain (although gain's usually hanging around somewhere), and I think she'd be drawn to snogging the face off anyone that took her fancy, male or female. She's a natural predator – in the best possible way – because if you did it with her, you'd probably come away having had a really good time".

She continues: "Ideally, in soaps, given the need for constant reinvention in order to create six tags a week, everyone would be bisexual. Then everyone could have sex with as many people as possible, which would aid us in finding those vital dooff-dooff moments."

So whilst soap bisexuals are at least visible, there seem to be very few openly identifiable bisexuals in other types of drama. This is regrettable, because when it does work it takes the narrative into exciting and interesting terrain. The depiction of Nessa, the protagonist in Hugo Blick's political thriller The Honourable Woman, uses her bisexuality as a metaphor for her rootlessness. Her personal contradictions as a Jewish woman working with Palestinians in the persona non grata land of the Gaza Strip are also stirring attributes to the plot. She, I would argue, is the most sophisticated representation of bisexuality on British television.

Can we hope for more of this type of representation in the future? Will British drama catch up with the US in terms of proclivity? Johnny Capps, who now produces Merlin and Atlantis, says that the future is the "supernatural and mythology-based dramas catering for younger viewers that happily rely on bisexual or pansexual heroes and heroines. Bisexuality in these genres is important, as plotlines are modernist and characters are fluid in their identities".

I can see his point, as nearly every American drama aimed at young people features some form of bisexuality: Lost Girl, Arrow, Gotham, Orphan Black, The Flash and the aforementioned True Blood.

However, with some uber-fantasist shows, like the Sky One/Showtime series Penny Dreadful, the notion of sexuality as fluid and the avoidance of labels can lead to another form of bisexual erasure. Creator John Logan is on the record as saying: "When people ask 'is he gay or bi' or whatever, the question is almost irrelevant, because I believe human beings act in the moment in the way that is true for them."

This, I believe, mirrors young actresses, performers and models, whose sexual fluidity seems to be a given on their CVs (or should that be resumes). That these young stars are unwilling to adhere to any label is exciting in one sense, but a refusal to claim the bisexual label can create further ambiguity. Maybe what are needed are writers, producers and directors to be upfront about their own bisexuality. As Karin Young concludes, "Although we have gay and lesbian writers round the table, we don't have any writers who define themselves as bisexual. More openly-bisexual writers/producers might give us more bisexual character representation, which would be a good thing. But, essentially, all characters should be approached in the same way, regardless of sexuality".

Can't say any fairer than that.

The L Word's Alice and Jenny soon became victims of bisexual erasure

Next month in DIVA, Jacquie Lawrence looks at the participation of lesbians and bi women in reality TV.

What are you thinking? Tweet *@DIVAmagazine* or email *letters@divamag.co.uk*.



ADDITIONAL DIGITAL CONTENT

More information on p5 | *divadigital.co.uk*

Down the pub with O'Hooley and Tidow

DIVA CAUGHT UP WITH THE YORKSHIRE FOLK DUO AHEAD OF THEIR SUMMAT'S BREWIN' MICRO TOUR TO TALK BEER, BEING BEST FRIENDS AND THE REAL ALE REVOLUTION

WORDS CARRIE LYELL

"We like to uncover things, pick scabs and throw a different angle on things"

PHOTO BRYAN LEDGARD

It's our round, but O'Hooley and Tidow are on the soft drinks. "We're taking a break from drinking at the moment," Belinda O'Hooley tells me. It seems strange timing, given that she and her partner Heidi Tidow are about to embark on a 30-day tour of real ale venues up and down the country. "We're absolutely madly passionate about the real ale revolution, and what that means," she says. "The spirit of the small people who are saying goodbye to the corporate nature of the pub business and brewing beer and taking it into their own hands. But us ourselves, we decided to take a bit of a break from it, so going into these real ale venues is going to be torture!"

At least they know they won't have any nasty hangovers to contend with. "I would say the best advice with Heidi is never to have a drink because I don't know what it is about her but one time, she can have two or three pints [and] she's fine. Another night, she'll have a couple of pints – maybe only one – and she'll wake up in the morning with the worst hangover. Literally, a hangover from hell," O'Hooley says, to protests from Tidow. "Not after one!" "Well, two then..." O'Hooley chides. What is the ultimate hangover cure, then? "It's really weird," says Tidow. "But about midday, a big bag of ready salted crisps. That seems to do the trick."

Both ale aficionados, what does their choice of tipple say about them, I wonder? "Ooh, well," says Tidow. "When I am drinking beer, my favourite is a light and hoppy ale. Don't know what that says about me... it's quite tasty." "Tasty! Yeah. I would describe Heidi as tasty." "This is all sounding a bit dodgy, isn't it?" laughs Tidow. "What does yours say about you, Belinda?" "I like a really tasty pint of beer, and if I'm drinking anything it's got to be that because I think it's got taste, quality, it looks good, it smells good. I wouldn't say that necessarily describes me, but..." she laughs.

While the tour and the album are very much a celebration of real ale culture, there's also a serious side to it, and the pair wanted to look at the bad and the ugly of our fascination with alcohol. Tidow explains: "As well as celebrating the brilliant things about drinking and going out with your mates, we also really wanted to explore that other side of things as well. That's what we tend to do with our music. We like to uncover things and pick scabs and throw a different angle on subjects."

Both the tour and the album are part of what O'Hooley and Tidow call "an experiment" and inspired by that real ale revolution, they're going back to basics. "It's kind of assumed as a performer that every tour you do you're going to go to bigger venues, you're going to do bigger shows, and we really wanted to challenge that," O'Hooley says. "We wanted to do something that was in keeping with the spirit of independence and the small, so do a micro tour where we bring our music into smaller venues, intimate gatherings, and a micro album so instead of putting it out on a label, we're going to do it on our own, there's only a limited edition of 1,000 copies, we're keeping everything small for this."

Hitting the road in their camper van Birgitté, the tour sees them head to small and unusual venues across the country. There aren't many couples who could spend two months in a camper van and not want to kill each other, but O'Hooley and Tidow aren't many couples. "It's really cheesy, but me and Belinda are best friends," Tidow says. "We have a right laugh together and we really enjoy the long journeys. It's just our little bit of quiet time where we can chat through ideas. We have a bit of a sing, listen to music, and we don't really argue or get on each other's nerves, do we?"

Kicking off in Ulverstone, the tour sounds fantastic, and whether you're on the booze or the blackcurrant and soda, it's not to be missed. "It's going to be a lot of fun," says Tidow. "We're going to encourage audience participation so we want people to sing along, and there's also going to be a full range of emotions. From melancholy through to the absolute ridiculous. We like to have a bit of a laugh as well, a bit of inbetween-song banter so it's just going to be a really nice shared experience and we want people to come along and share it with us."

Mine's a pint, please.

O'Hooley and Tidow (and Birgitté) hit the road in September.
ohooleyandtidow.com



ME WITH FIRST GIRLFRIEND. Pen drawing (2015)

"DRAWING RELAXES AND THRILLS ME"

ARTIST AND FILMMAKER LISA GORNICK GOES BACK TO HER ROOTS AT THE EDINBURGH FRINGE

WORDS ANNA MCNAY

"I get breathless thinking about pens – excited, desperate to have them nearby," says filmmaker and actor Lisa Gornick, who will be performing her live drawing show as part of the Edinburgh Fringe. "My first language feels like drawing. I still have this instinctive way of just feeling my way through – making mistakes, being ok with them. Drawing is always there for me. It's a place to free up my head. To let my emotion, my feeling come out. To surprise and sometimes delight myself. It helps to relax me and thrill me."

Gornick studied history at Edinburgh University and was a member of a student theatre group, taking part in a fringe show each summer. After graduating, she became a stand-up comic with the Gilded Balloon, so she says it feels like a return, working with them again for their 30th anniversary and reviving a performance about her Russian roots.

Her show tells the story of Grandma Ray, a Jewish Eastender in the 1920s. She lived as a straight, married woman but, as the story unfolds, her inner lesbian is revealed.

"Drawing live is exciting," says Gornick. "It's always different. You sense the audience with you on the page. I'm also talking through the performance, which is a bit like juggling."

Lisa Gornick's two feature films, Do I Love You? and Tick Tock Lullaby, have won awards and are distributed worldwide. She is currently in post-production for her third feature, The Book of Gabrielle, a cross-platform production.

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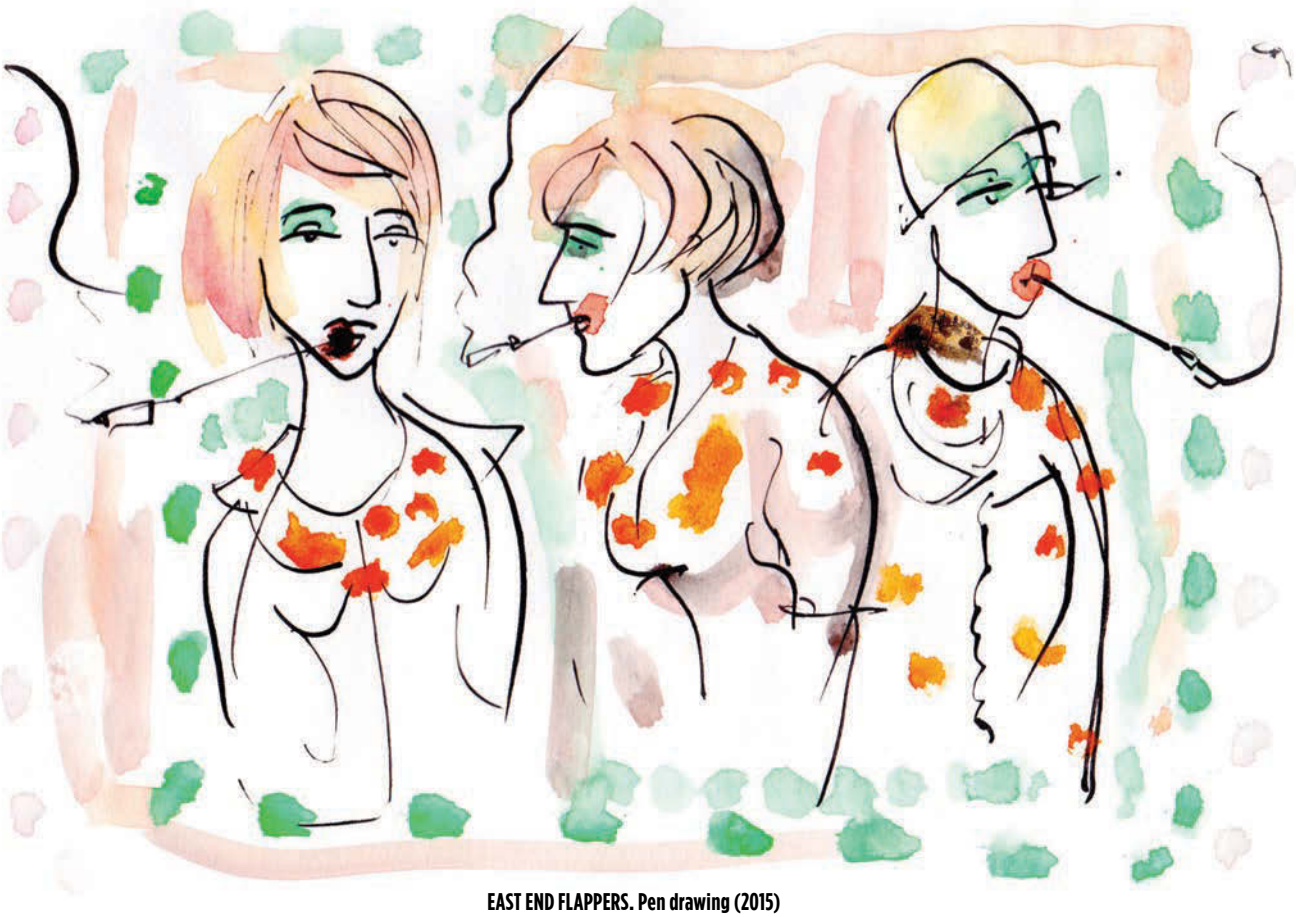


Drawn from memory: Lisa Gornick uses art to tell stories

PHOTO LIANE HARRIS



ART WITH GRANDMA RAY. Pen drawing (2015)



EAST END FLAPPERS. Pen drawing (2015)



**Cool and conscious:
Ko Kawashima's Raw Fest
offers something for everyone**

Hear me raw

US "entrepreneurial transplant" Ko Kawashima used to manage Bjork. Now, as a transformational life coach, she's organised a festival with a difference.

DIVA CHATS TO FOUNDER, KO KAWASHIMA, ABOUT RAW FEST – A WELLBEING FESTIVAL WITH A DIFFERENCE

DIVA: Hi Ko! Thanks for stopping by. Can you tell us why we need to go to Raw Fest?
KO: Raw Fest is a retreat and festival created to inspire and spark conversation on how to live a healthier lifestyle. The raw in the title isn't necessarily about raw foods more than it's about getting to the core of things, getting raw with yourself. Raw Fest is a decompression from your everyday life – a retreat and safe haven from our busy electronic devices, school drop-offs, office politics, traffic, the hustle and bustle of city living. The time at Raw Fest is to relax, reboot, enjoy, learn and be inspired about how to live a more vital, creative, fulfilling and vibrant lifestyle from the inside out. It's not about preaching and having people feeling guilty about their choices, it's more about sharing information, so people can decide what works best for them in their own time.

Is the raw food movement particularly popular with lesbians, queers and bi women?
I see people of all colours, creeds, shapes, sizes and sexual preferences, including LGBTQI, choosing to investigate and explore how to live more of an authentic and healthy life. I'm also a transformational life coach, which means whatever you want it to mean. I support and guide all sorts of individuals to realise their self-contentment and happiness and support them in transforming old, hindering belief systems and stories into the story they truly want to be living and embodying. So from this place, I see all walks of life making choices to feel lighter, clearer and happier; eating organic foods, changing their internal dialogue, shifting who they commune with and how they spend their personal time is part and parcel of whole living.

Do you eat raw food yourself?
Yes, but I do mix things up based on the time of year and, really, listening to my own body wisdom. Eating living foods creates a deeper sense of clarity, calmness, connection, energy and levity. Eating heavier foods (breads, pasta, meats, dairy, sugar), meaning heavier on the body to digest, can cause one to feel emotionally "heavy" and can feed into sadness, depression, lethargy, anger, negative thinking, stress.

As well as food and workshops what else can we expect at Raw Fest?
Pamper yourself with a massage in the relaxation village, there are kids' activities, nature walks by the private lake, there are conscious films, DJs, live music, there's a Conscious Bazaar and Market area, nightly bonfires, yoga, meditation, arts and crafts, lawn games such as giant chess, tennis and giant jenga, and dogs are welcome on leads.

This is an unusual, one-of-a-kind festival, isn't it?
Yes. I've engaged with pieces of this experience at workshops, yoga conferences and wellness festivals but nothing with all of these elements combined, and moreover, with the kind of contemporary message and positioning. If someone says "spiritual" or "conscious", a presumption has already been made... "airy-fairy, unicorns and rainbows and tie-dye and dreads". It's ironic for me as I don't want someone to assume they "know" who I am based on my sexual orientation – just another box and judgment that keeps us separate. In the same vein, I don't want people to assume what being healthy and living from a heart-based centre looks like. My hope is this retreat and festival enables people to be able to co-exist, let their guard down, get inspired by one another's differences and share new ideas and approaches towards optimal, healthy living.

Tell us a bit about the location and why you chose it.
I've been coming to this country for years, but had never been to the New Forest. There was something so magical about driving into it and seeing all the horses frolicking and playing in the dirt without any fences. I appreciated the diversity of the land as well – flat, rocky, by the water, trees, space – mother nature working all of her wonders. The environment really allows people to drop down, leave the tension or distractions behind and just let the air out.

Are queer families and their dogs welcome, and is it accessible for wheelchair users?
Absolutely!

What's your favourite raw food meal or snack?
Organic avocado, broccoli or radish sprouts with fresh lemon, Himalayan salt and a touch of raw olive oil.

Raw Fest, Pylewell Park, 14-16 August.
rawfest.co .uk

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FACING OUT

JANE CZYZSELSKA TALKS TO CELEBRATED PHOTOGRAPHER ZANELE MUHOLI ABOUT HER LARGEST AND MOST ACCLAIMED COLLECTION OF PORTRAITS

Faces And Phases 2006-14 looks like it's been a long-term labour of love for the South African artist Zanele Muholi. The exhibition of selected portraits at the Photographer's Gallery which launched the book (and builds on a previous edition of five years ago) in London was a moving testament to life and loss and the defiance of the queer people she has captured over the last eight years. A necessary and political creation, the book and the images are unsettling because we know that some of the women and trans men featured might now be dead. The uncertainty about which of the people in the images have suffered the horror of rape and/or death, or repeated abuse or rejection, give the work more power still. This is a legacy, a record of lesbian, bisexual, queer and trans lives that confronts culturally dominant imagery and storytelling.

DIVA: Reading the forward in Faces And Phases 2006-14, one gets the impression that there is a systematic ongoing attempt to erase and brutalise lesbian lives in South Africa, almost as if the legislation written into the South African constitution post-apartheid has not been accepted.

ZANELE MUHOLI: 2016 will mark 20 years since the adoption of the final South African constitution. Meaning we are now dealing with a new generation who might not have an idea of what is happening, hence the need to continue educating people. There is a need for intergenerational conversations to ensure that vital information is passed down to younger generations. This is done to preserve our way of life and good principles are inherited. The existence of different phobias, including homophobia and ▶



Left:
Zanele Muholi,
Vredehoek
Cape Town 2011
Right:
Tumi Nkopane,
KwaThema Springs
Johannesburg 2010



Left to right: **Bakhambile Skhosana,** *Natalspruit 2010***; Lerato Dumse,** *Parktown Johannesburg 2013***; Nokuthula Dhladhla,** *Berea Johannesburg 2007*

xenophobia, feed on a lack of historical understanding. Our parliament is now occupied by new ministers, some of whom were never exposed to previous politicians, such as Simon Nkoli and Nelson Mandela, who supported the LGBT movement. So there is a need to educate communities at large on a regular basis. Schools, government departments, religious institutions and other social spaces must be used to ensure a young man born 20 years ago knows what the constitution entails.

You say that the work in the book is highly personal as well as political and that, in a way, it is trying to redress the systematic erasure of black lives; an erasure that you have very keenly felt in your own family's history. How do you feel now that the book has been released and the work has been seen in exhibitions around the world?

This is the first publication to exist in Africa where we write, document and archive ourselves. This work is not about me alone. This is a way to be counted and form a census. It is a responsibility to rewrite a visual history in a manner that I understand, that we share our love for same gender and photography. If we don't do it for ourselves, it means we never existed. Many magazines have written about LGBT but not many black lesbians have made it on the covers of those magazines. This is a life-time project, and we still need different volumes to continue, documenting different phases. The intention is to infect more spaces to show we exist and are capable of writing ourselves.

What I love about your work is that you are unapologetically making black lesbians, queer and bi women, and trans men, visible – more so than any other living lesbian photographer working in the world today. Do you agree?

This is a duty for me, serving myself and other members of my community. I can't afford to be apologetic because I didn't have an African or black lesbian reference that was aimed at making my generation visible. My reality is different and unique and I'm working hard to make sure it is projected. I don't come from a space of privilege, I wasn't exposed to resources, there was no camera



Left to right: **Phila Mbanjwa,** *Pietermaritzburg KwaZulu Natal 2012*; **Ricki Kgositau,** *Melville Johannesburg 2013*; **Nontuthuzelo Mduba,** *Daveyton Johannesburg 2013*

lying around, waiting for me to pick it up.

I love to see the different ways in which the subjects of your work engage with the camera, and thus with the viewer – they say so much with their stance, their eyes. Can you say something about the way you work with each subject when you shoot them, whether you try to get them to feel comfortable for the shot, or whether you have a sense of how you want to portray different sitters?
There are no subjects, sitters or studio in my work, only participants. The way of looking at the camera is based on trust and a relationship shared with them. They are friends and friends of friends, who see the importance of being counted and documented in history. Some are activists who are part of the movement and have contributed considerably.

> "This is the first publication in Africa where we document ourselves. It is a census"

You recently had an exhibition at the Photographer's Gallery in London, part of the Deutsche Borse Photography Prize show, where you invited London artists to respond to your portraits. Can you tell us how it was for you to engage in this collaborative installation?
It was a group show and I was part of a shortlist. Being there was a dream come true; not everyone gets a chance to be there, just like being featured in DIVA is a novelty. Being amongst top photographers is something special. Now [I'm] wishing for a cover, as a way of SA/UK collaboration.

You lost a huge archive of images through theft in 2012. Were they ever recovered? What are your reflections today on this incident?
The external hard drives were stolen and never recovered and I will never recover from that loss. It left a huge gap in my life. I will never be the same. I have produced new work, but what I lost in that burglary will never be recovered. So I feel much pain, because most of it was unpublished work.

Faces and Phases 2006-14 is available from Amazon, priced £32.
For more information about Zanele Muholi's work, visit *stevenson.info/artists/muholi.html*.

FREIYA BENSON ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT TRANS MEN AND WOMEN

As someone who is trans, and has spent most of her life thinking about what that means, it's easy to forget that to a lot of people this is something completely new. There are new words, new thoughts and new questions, and it can make many people feel left behind, or out of the loop when it comes to trans awareness. Sometimes people want to ask questions to find out more, but feel worried to do so, because they don't want to seem ignorant, or risk upsetting others. Sometimes though, questions do need to be asked, to break down barriers, and to further mutual understanding and respect. The questions below are all real questions, from readers of DIVA and also from trans people's experiences.

TRANS 101

What does cis mean?

Cis or cisgender (now in the Oxford English Dictionary) is a term for someone who identifies with the gender that was given to them when they were born. It's basically the opposite of trans (or transgender), where someone doesn't identify with the gender they were given when they were born. To put it another way, if when you were born the doctor decided you were female, and you never questioned that because it felt right, then you're most likely cisgender.

How do you know you're trans?

Simply put, it's the same way you might know that you're not. I knew I wasn't male once puberty hit me, but it took me over 15 years to work out exactly who I was, and what that meant. I didn't have the language or the reference points from other people like me for a long time, so I had to work it out myself, and when you're working from nothing, it's going to take time to narrow down exactly how you identify.

What's sex like?

Sometimes it's good, sometimes it's less so. There are bits I wish could last for ever, and bits where it's just not really happening. Honestly, sometimes I find it a little awkward, and sometimes it can be overwhelming. Equally though, there are times where it is the best thing in the world, and I can't believe that something I once found so terrifying could be so amazing. Generally though, it's probably a lot like how you find sex.

FIND OUT MORE

Meet a dynamic and diverse collection of trans people from around the UK and watch their stories at

allabouttrans.org.uk/patchwork-digital-storytelling

Do you think cis-only gatherings or events are ever acceptable?

Most spaces, although not exclusively cis, are cis-dominated. Say I go to a festival, for instance. Chances are I'll be only one of a handful of trans people there. Make the event smaller, like a gig, and it's likely I'll be the only trans person there. Cis gatherings and events already happen, and often they will be cis-only, just because cis people are hugely in the majority.

However, intentionally cis-only events are a different thing. What you're also saying, then, is do you think it's ever acceptable to have trans-exclusionary events? As it is, I'm not sure I'd want to go to an event that was trans exclusionary, but at the same time I'd also have to ask why is this event excluding me? I know that there are events that exclude trans people. I also know that this is often because the people running these events don't recognise trans identities.

The thing is, though, the identities they're trying so hard to protect are the same ones we're trying to protect as well. We've all had to fight hard to claim these identities, so I understand how it's difficult to allow others to also share in that, but allowing others in doesn't dilute that identity, it concentrates it, and makes it stronger and more powerful. Most importantly, it also gives everyone the right to co-exist in their chosen identities, free from prejudice, stigma and erasure.

How do partners/friends/family feel about you being trans?

There's no denying that many people, especially in family circles, can find it challenging. Sometimes it takes time, and sometimes it becomes something that is insurmountable, and things break down. It's often hard for everyone involved, because it's also often something new, and new can be very difficult to work with. I've been lucky, in that my family and friends have understood, and have wanted my happiness to be the thing that matters most. This is something I don't take for granted, as for many people, trans or otherwise, this isn't the case.

What's ok to ask a trans person about?

Think about something that's really important to your identity. Maybe it's your ethnicity or sexuality, the important thing is that it matters to you. Then think about what you'd want people to ask and not ask. This should give you a good idea of what would be appropriate.

Alternatively, if you're really not sure, before you ask the question, ask yourself this: "Do I really need to know this? In what way will this improve my life? How would it make me feel if I was asked this?"

Will you ever go back?

I personally won't, because I'm happy with how I am. But if someone does change their mind, what's the big deal? People change their minds about things all the time, and I'm not just talking about what to have for tea here. I have friends that have identified as straight, lesbian and bisexual at various times in their lives. People have the right to change their minds if they find out something isn't right for them. What it doesn't mean is that everyone who made that identity choice is also wrong. We are all individuals, and we are all different, even if we share the same identity.

How can you be a woman/man if you haven't had any surgery?

At the moment, when a child is born we base their gender identity on what genitals are present. Thing is, though, gender identity is more than what bits you have. Ask anyone about what makes them the gender they identify as and I doubt the reasons will just be about vaginas and penises. Identity is personal, but more importantly, it's individual. It's created and owned by the person claiming that identity. It may not sit with you, and it may at times challenge your identity but it doesn't make either yours or anyone else's identity any less valid. I identify as a woman. The body and genitals I have do not define this identity, but are instead just a part of it, alongside how I feel, how I look and what I know as an individual.



ADDITIONAL DIGITAL CONTENT

More information on p5

divadigital.co.uk

forever friends

WHAT HAPPENS TO A LESBIAN FRIENDSHIP WHEN ONE TRANSITIONS TO LIVE AS A MAN? JAKE AND KRISTA TELL THEIR STORY

INTERVIEW JANE CZYZSELSKA



PHOTOS PAUL GRACE; STYLIST HELEN SHEPARD AT BANG TIDY; DIVA 2006 SHOOT PETER PEDONOMOU

All friendships change over time, but former DIVA models Jake and Krista *(pictured left)* have stayed the course, despite falling out when Jake transitioned. When they asked to celebrate their relationship in these pages nine years after they appeared together in a DIVA style shoot, we said yes and asked them a few questions.

DIVA: How and when did you first become friends?

JAKE: Krista and I met at the Candy Bar when I was 21. I remember seeing her standing at the bottom of the stairs, wearing a white Diesel denim jacket, and thinking that she was absolutely stunning. She certainly stood out from the crowd, and as a new face she was already getting her fair share of attention. Having worked at the bar, I knew most of the girls who came in, so I was interested in someone fresh! Krista had attitude, a great sense of humour, and tons of Scottish charm, and we soon became inseparable. Whilst the initial sexual attraction gave way to a very close friendship, as I was already in a relationship, Krista and I were unusually close, and always jealous of each other's partners. She always felt that the girls I dated weren't good enough, and I was always jealous if anyone she liked came between us. Most of our relationships during this time were short-lived, but Krista and I always had each other to fall back on. We were very much faces on the scene, always out at the new parties, always last to leave the bars, and usually to be found still going strong at Soho eaterie Balan's at 6am, from where Krista would frequently head straight to a shoot!

KRISTA: I was 18 when we first met at the Candy Bar. I had moved to London to model and had spent a few months in the city before going into Soho to a lesbian bar. I was petrified about going to the Candy Bar but finally built up enough courage (and drank enough shots of vodka) and went. I was with a gay guy friend of mine and didn't know any lesbians. I was intimidated by everyone I saw and felt quite out of place. Most girls had short hair and a boyish or butch look at the time. I saw Jake pretty much as soon as I arrived; he stood out, with short shaved hair, tattooed arms and a deep voice. He had an entourage of friends. He was funny and very friendly – the opposite of how I expected him to be – so we hit it off. He took me under his wing and we were soon close friends. Out every night together, he took me to all the different girls' parties and when we didn't meet anyone we would go home together and console each other.

How did you identify back then in terms of your gender and sexuality?

JAKE: Much as I had thrown myself into the lesbian scene, and felt like I had found my "community", there was always the knowledge that I didn't truly belong, and I would say that I lived as a lesbian through necessity, but always felt that I was masquerading as something that I clearly wasn't. I had short hair, and dressed in boy's clothes, so fitted in well with the girls, but I constantly struggled with my gender identity. Back then (some 14 years ago), I didn't know anyone trans, and was one of the first people on the scene to take the plunge. Now, it's far more commonplace, and I do wish that I had had the nerve to start my transition earlier, but I think everything happens when it's meant to, and don't know how well I would have handled it had I done it at a younger age.

KRISTA: I wouldn't label myself anything. Although I'm in a relationship with a woman, I think we ultimately fall for the person not their sex.

Six years into your friendship you fell out during Jake's gradual transition. How did you make sense of the four-year rift in your friendship?

JAKE: I moved away from London for some time, living in Brighton and then New York, and Krista was away modelling around the world, so we had already had some space from our friendship. When I came back to London in my late 20s, and she returned from her travels, we almost instantly reconnected, and were once again inseparable. The only difference was that during my time in New York, I had met several young trans men, and through ▶

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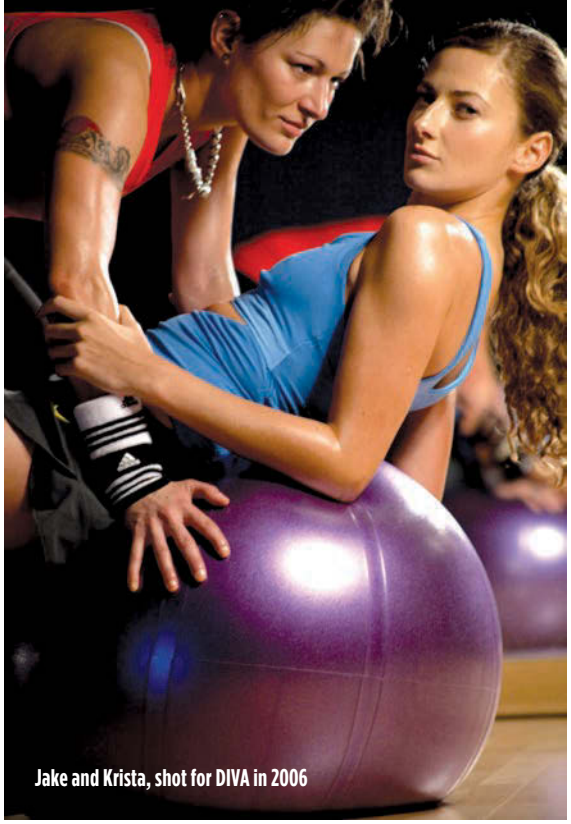
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Jake and Krista, shot for DIVA in 2006

some very important friendships that I still have today, finally made the decision to be true to myself, and begin transitioning. For Krista, it was obviously a shock. I had always been "her wee girl", and now I was suddenly telling her that I was in fact a man, and that I had to act upon that. The closeness of our relationship had always felt special, and I suppose there was some part of both of us that felt we might end up together. I think that the idea of someone so close to her changing so drastically was too much for her to take in. I also know that Krista tried her hardest to support and accept what I was doing, I just think that the whole concept was too alien, too jarring, too much to comprehend, and at a time when I needed her to unwaveringly be there for me, her struggle seemed selfish and disrespectful, and it eventually drove us apart. Much as my mother told me a few years ago that she had "cried for her little girl", I am sure that Krista felt a huge loss too. We had been there for each other through deaths in our close families, break-ups and everything inbetween, but with something so divisive as a "change" of gender, at least outwardly, there was nowhere to go.

KRISTA: When Jake told me about wanting to be a guy and to transition I was in shock. I had no idea – he had never mentioned anything to me about it and we had been close friends for seven years. To me he seemed happy as a butch dyke. I don't think it helped that each time we spoke about it we had both been drinking. We would have explosive arguments about it. I completely rejected the idea. I was afraid of what he would go through medically and personally, and that ultimately I would lose my friend. I needed time to come to terms with the change. I felt everything I said was wrong and I couldn't be as supportive as everyone else. I didn't even know anyone transgender. In the four years we spent apart I researched transgender online, read many articles and tried to understand. In that time we both also grew up and calmed down.

"Much as my mother cried for her 'little girl', I am sure that Krista felt a huge loss too"

How has your friendship changed?

JAKE: Krista was wary of the whole process. As I had never really voiced these feelings pre-New York, and she had always known me as a relatively happy "girl", she couldn't understand the sudden change, nor the need to do something that to her felt so drastic and extreme. She would worry that I would become "addicted to testosterone", that I would be alienated from our precious lesbian scene (which, inevitably, I was...), that I would end up alone. All of these (bar the testosterone addiction) were legitimate concerns, and ones that I was having too, but I just needed support, not constant questioning and second-guessing. Eventually, as I began to undergo the effects of the hormone treatment, and then had my top surgery, I felt overwhelmed by it all, and found solace in other friends, and my mother, and Krista and I drifted completely apart.

Some four years later, when we reconnected, things had of course changed. Krista was in a serious, committed relationship, with a girl who I had never really met. My own changes during this time were huge, and the closeness that we had shared as young "girls" on the scene had all but gone. However, we had a shared history, and when I saw her face again after so long, I did feel a rush of love, of familiarity, and of sadness for what we had lost.

Now we move in different circles, Krista still spending her time with her predominantly gay female friends, myself with friends from school, whom I have known for nearly 30 years. Life has changed so drastically for me since my transition, and I now work for trans visibility, write and direct films to elicit change for trans people, and our representation on screen, and enjoy a lunch with friends more than a night on the tiles.

KRISTA: When we met up again it was so nice to have him back in my life; I had missed him. I soon realised I had gained a male friend instead of losing a female one. I never really think about what the dynamics were before because the person is still there. The sense of loss has gone because our lives have changed and we wouldn't have been doing the same things together now, years on. ▶



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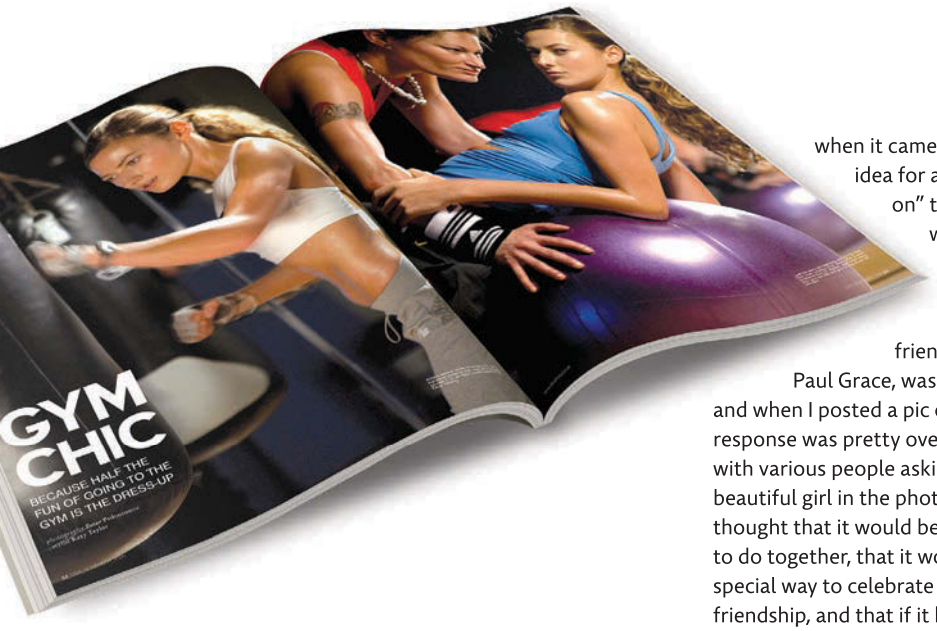
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when it came out! I had the idea for a "nine years on" type of shoot when we were out in town recently. A photographer friend of mine, Paul Grace, was snapping us, and when I posted a pic online, the response was pretty overwhelming, with various people asking who the beautiful girl in the photo was! I just thought that it would be a great thing to do together, that it would be a special way to celebrate our ongoing friendship, and that if it helped even one person going through what we went through, then that would be a great thing.

KRISTA: When we did the initial shoot, it was just a bit of fun, and something that we wanted to do together, as best friends. I guess we also thought it might get us some attention from the ladies too. Which it did. I did this article and shoot to celebrate our friendship 10 years on and to help anyone else who is transgender.

Want to learn more about trans men? Watch Jake Graf's movie Brace here *vimeo.com/131741261* and don't miss 52 Tuesdays *youtu.be/Qxu5CVZNv0o*, in selected cinemas in August.

What have you learned about yourself, your friendship?

JAKE: We do make an effort to spend time together. She and I are at ease with one another now, all of our differences left in the past. She and her girlfriend, Kate, are always there for birthdays and important events, so Krista and I now enjoy quiet dinners, talking like old friends. We are both at an age where we see that what we have shared is more important than the few years' hiatus, and that old disagreements are just that, best left in the past. Life is too short, and there are few friends that will be with you as long as she has been with me, and that's worth holding onto.

KRISTA: What I have learnt with regards to labelling myself and others is that I believe we fall for the person not their gender, and I think having Jake in my life has opened my mind to thinking about love in this way. I feel very lucky to have him as a friend and am very proud of him and the work he is doing for the trans community.

Tell us about the DIVA style shoot, why did you decide to do it in 2006 and why remake it today?

JAKE: The DIVA shoot all those years ago was great fun, something that we were proud of and excited to be able to do together. I had previously been a DIVA cover model, and the offer of a spread with my best friend was beyond exciting. It also garnered us a lot of extra attention from the ladies

"I realised I had gained a male friend instead of losing a female one"



Then and now: filmmaker Jake Graf and model Krista, in DIVA 2006 *(above)* and today



Raising the Skirt: Warrior
Photograph by Dawn Felicia Knox in collaboration with Nicola Canavan (2014)

"I WANT TO HELP WOMEN SHED THEIR FEARS"

NICOLA CANAVAN TELLS ANNA MCNAY ABOUT HER PROJECT TO HONOUR THE VULVA

The tradition of "raising the skirt" has its roots as far back as Ancient Greece. In global folklore, the revelation of a woman's genitals – her cunt – has been thought to calm the forces of nature and drive away evil spirits. In Britain and Ireland sheela-na-gigs (stone carvings of females with exaggerated vulva) were placed above church doorways for precisely these reasons.

For Nicola Canavan, an artist whose work is informed by research into sociological histories of women, abjection and otherness, reclaiming the cunt is a powerful tool. "Wikipedia describes the cunt as 'as vulgar term for female genitalia'," she explains. "But the word 'cunt' wasn't always a derogatory term. It once meant 'skin', 'woman', 'femininity' or, more commonly, 'the female genitals'. The word 'cunt' as a derogatory term was born from misogyny, oppression and the fear of female sexuality."

In 2014, having lived with years of shame about her own body – and vulva – put on her by sexual partners, Canavan initiated the Raising The Skirt project, funded by the Live Art Development Agency. "I wanted a place



Nicola Canavan *(left)* and Dawn Felicia Knox



that people of all genders could go to learn about the cunt and be reminded that we are all different and that it is something to celebrate."

She put out a call for workshop participants who wished to reclaim – or claim – their cunts, break down female body stereotypes and open up a dialogue around the act of raising the skirt. Activities included physical actions, getting participants to draw their cunts, and sharing of personal experiences. A live performance was also held – "We Unite in Her Honour" – where participants raised their skirts and used their voices to unite their individual bodies into one collective body or "social cunt". This summer saw a second series of workshops, this time based more on acts of body kindness and breaking down the fears that we all have about our bodies.

The Raising The Skirt website unsurprisingly has a significant research aspect to it and Canavan is asking for contributions, including photographs of vulvas and pubic hair, papers, articles, poetry and memoirs. She will be launching a funding campaign later this year and hopes to create a publication for release by the end of 2017. "My dream," she says, "is to carry out the workshop in every country across the world."

Despite being told by some that she is "sinning and going to hell," Canavan believes that the overwhelmingly positive – and international – response to the project speaks for itself. "We know it is important," she says. "I want to help women shed some of their fears so that they can face each day with full agency." Ⓓ

raisingtheskirt.com | *nicolacanavan.com*





Female genitals were once thought to have the power to calm the ocean: workshop images by Dawn Felicia Knox in collaboration with Nicola Canavan

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ADDITIONAL DIGITAL CONTENT
More information on p5
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BUDDY WEARS RED SPOTTY BANDANA, **MODEL'S OWN**

BLUE WEARS BLUE BANDANA, **MODEL'S OWN**

BELLA WEARS TARTAN BOW TIE, **DOGLOVEIT**

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BUDDY WEARS RAW DENIM DOG COAT IN BLUE, **PETHAUS** @ **LEADTHEWALK.COM** AND STUDDED BLACK LEATHER COLLAR, **HUNTER**

THERE'S SOMETHING *About* MARY

SINGER-SONGWRITER MARY LAMBERT TALKS TO LOUISE CAROLIN ABOUT OVERCOMING ABUSE AND MENTAL ILLNESS, AND FINDING FAME AND LOVE

Mary Lambert's enjoying herself. It's a rainy morning in London, where she's in the middle of a whistlestop press tour to promote the UK release of her album, Heart On My Sleeve, and she's been prodded out of bed by two PRs and a make-up artist, after a late night in the bar, to take part in DIVA's cover shoot.

If it was me, I'd be hella grumpy. But this is Mary and she's giving it everything, posing and smiling for the camera, joking and singing along with Judy Garland and Ella Fitzgerald on her laptop. To say she lights up the dim makeshift studio we've created in this ▶

PHOTOGRAPHER
CHRISTA HOLKA
STYLIST
MAX ALLEN
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MARY WEARS
WHITE VEST, **EVANS**
FRESH FLOWER CORSAGE
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ADDITIONAL DIGITAL CONTENT
More information on p5 | *divadigital.co.uk*



MARY WEARS
BLUE TOP
VIVIEN OF HOLLOWAY,
JEANS **EVANS**,
FRESH FLOWER CORSAGE
PALAIS FLOWERS

curtained hotel suite is an understatement. She's giving the photographer's flash a run for its money.

This is the second time I've interviewed Mary for DIVA. The last time, she was still barely known; a charismatic spoken-word performer and classically-trained composer, her sweet, soaring vocal hook on rap-artist Macklemore's pro-gay hit Same Love may have given us earworms but most listeners still couldn't picture, let alone name, the woman who wrote and sang it.

Now – following two Grammy nominations, stage appearances with the likes of Jennifer Hudson, Queen Latifah and Madonna, a record deal with Capitol, which released her EP Welcome To The Age Of My Body (2013) and the US version of Heart On My Sleeve (2014), and a huge hit with the single Secrets, which reached number one in the US dance chart – Mary Lambert is a name to conjure with on both sides of the Atlantic.

Twenty-six-year-old Mary is taking all this in her stride, although there are occasional blips, as she admits after the shoot ends, when we shoo away the entourage and make ourselves comfy in the five-star armchairs for a chat.

"I have a hard time being in LA," she says, describing her time there, working on the album. "I don't know, there's just so many industry people. I feel like a really confident person in my life but when I go to LA, I just start second-guessing myself.

"I got invited to go to this very exclusive bar and you have to be invited to go – I kind of looked around and I was like, 'Oh gosh, is that so and so? Celebrities are here? Oh my gosh, I can't believe I'm in this place!' I was there with a couple of my bandmates for about an hour and a half – I was still drinking my cocktail – and the manager comes over and says, 'I'm so sorry, I'm going to have to ask you to go because we have this table reserved.' And this thing just shot in me, I was so, I was hurt because I was like, 'I'm not famous enough to be here'. It really affected my worth and made me feel so insecure. I went home, where I was staying, and I just cried. I realised, my value system gets skewed when I'm in LA. It's just the nature and the energy of Los Angeles."

WIN!

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"There's no class for self-love. You have to figure out"

Unsettling bouts of imposter syndrome notwithstanding, Lambert sounds as driven, focused and productive as ever. Like her chorus for Same Love, which was composed and recorded in a few hours, Heart On My Sleeve was conceived in the studio and completed in one clean sweep. Besides a mournful, lezzed-up cover of the Rick Springfield hit Jessie's Girl, it is all new material. But there is a new, external pressure now – " a massive team of people counting on you to make this thing and you have to come out with a hit, we have to have a hit!"

Lambert is determined that this pressure won't change her. There are two kinds of songs on the radio, she says, "the kind where someone's sat down and said, 'I'm going to craft an incredible song'. And it's totally valid, that's absolutely a legitimate way to write. And the other way to write is, 'I'm going to *die* unless I write this down, I'm going to *explode*. I *need* to tell my truth'. And that's the way that I write".

This reminds me of an interview in which she revealed that she initially resisted treatment for her bipolar disorder because she saw her creativity as rooted in her understanding of herself as a tortured artist. Now on low-dose medication which stabilises the condition's debilitating highs and lows, she realises that her signature heartfelt style does not require her personal suffering.

"There's no class for self-love," she tells me. "You have to figure out. I went to school for music composition and there was never a moment when they were like,'This is how to be a good human'. They teach you how to be a good artist. When you hear about famous old classical composers, you hear that they were terrible to their kids or their wives, or they cheated and they were bad people. Is it worth it? You made beautiful music but you have a terrible life and [are] mean to people? I don't think so. I don't want that life! I want to be a loving, kind person and have great personal relationships and make music. I think you can have both. But self-care and self-love in general is a practice."

Lambert knows of what she speaks. A survivor of both child sex abuse and a gang-rape in her teens, she spent years in therapy but says most of the time she was "faking it".

"I didn't want to be a fucked-up kid," she explains. "I didn't want to be bipolar. I didn't want to have the family that I had, and so all I did at therapy was talk about boys I had crushes on and I never wanted to talk about the sexual abuse from my father, I never wanted to talk about anything that I actually went through and when I did try to talk about it there was this wall, like I couldn't fully express what had happened because I had blacked it out. It was such a coping mechanism."

She eventually discovered a form of therapy that worked for her and began to heal for real in her late teens. She is now an outspoken advocate for young people with mental health issues, using her lyrics to talk about a condition that many find scary and mysterious.

"I've got bipolar disorder, my shit's not in order," she sings jauntily on Secrets, "I'm overweight, I'm always late, I've got too many things to say… They tell us from the time we're young, To hide the things that we don't like about ourselves… Well I'm over it". Her sweet voice belies a steely internal resolve; what is moving is her determination to invite everyone in, to offer her audience a way out of individual shame and isolation. Imagine the power of a dancefloor rocking to this song.

Until recently her characteristically emotional gigs were packed with "women in their teens, a lot of lesbians", but her audience is changing. Right after DIVA's interview, she returned to the US to embark on a short tour with Irish pop-rockers The Script. It may not be appropriate for her to perform a piece about rape at these shows, she concedes, but she continues to present her trademark mix of poetry and song: "Every show, I perform Body Love, which is exciting for me to do, first of all [as] spoken word and then to talk about body image. So I don't stay away from my social justicey, body-positive work just because I'm in front of more of a pop audience."

Heart On My Sleeve is a pop album, she says. "[Most of] the songs are just storytelling and about love." The exclusive UK version includes a new ▶

recording of She Keeps Me Warm, her gorgeous reworking of the Same Love chorus as a paean to lesbian love. The original video – a touching romance made with an all-queer cast and crew, starring Mary herself – became a huge internet hit. Last time we spoke she was keen to stress how important it was to her to play the romantic lead: "I've never seen a sex scene with a plus-size girl unless it was supposed to be funny. And that's really hurtful." Now the song has a major label release and there is a new video, featuring Mary alone at a piano. How does she feel about that, I ask?

"I was apprehensive but I understood why I was being asked to do it," she tells me. "Part of it was also my doing because I didn't want to adjust the old video. The only reason we made the new video is because there's a new track. We re-recorded the old She Keeps Me Warm, which was more heavily orchestrated and a little bit slower and not quite right for pop radio. So we re-cut it and I was happy with that because I was excited to try it in a different way."

The original video is still online (*vimeo.com/74687675*). "It's not going anywhere, it needs to stay in the world. It's important that a lesbian love-story music video exists, with a plus-size girl."

This brings us neatly to the subject of Mary's personal love-life. In 2013 she met and fell in love with musician/producer Michelle Chamuel, after seeing her perform on the US version of the TV show, The Voice. Did she know Michelle was gay, I wonder?

"I don't know, she was just wearing blazers on the show!" Lambert laughs. (I watched some videos later. Michelle is so gay, you can't miss it.)

"But honestly, it wasn't my intention to chase after her," she continues. "I reached out to her, I sent an email and said, 'Listen, I'm just such a fan of you and I want to work on music with you', because she's just a phenomenal song-writer. And she emailed me back and said, 'This is so weird, I just read an article about you and I sent it to my family because your story is so inspiring. I'm a fan of your work!' So we started sending song ideas back and forth, we were going to make an EP together, and then I thought, 'I'd love to meet you in person', so I just stopped by her house when I was on tour and she walked outside and I was just – 'I'm so screwed right now'!"

> "I'm going to die unless I write this down, I'm going to explode. I need to tell my truth"

Love at first sight was followed in due course by a move from hectic downtown Seattle, where she had been based, to Amherst, Massachusetts, where Chamuel lives. It was clearly the right move for Mary.

"I think everyone expected that I was going to move to LA. But I was beginning to feel like my life was so chaotic. Waking up in a bustling city is fun for a point, but when you're flying in and out and you just hear sirens at night – taking a walk in the woods for two hours is so cool. It felt like an oasis, a little vacation every time I visited. And in the winter... it was perfect."

As busy musicians, how do they manage the inevitable separations that are part of both their work? It helps that Michelle is in the same industry, says Mary. Last year she spent over 300 days on the road, which she found "excruciating". "Luckily, this year I've had some time to recuperate, and we have been able to be home a lot more together. Distance is definitely a great tool for not taking someone for granted! I think the bottom line is that your partner needs to know that they are on your mind. Whether it's a little text that says, 'Hey I saw this ridiculous drawing of a sea otter that is adorable – also can we please buy a sea otter', or a phone call every night before bed."

By all measures, Lambert is in a great place – her career burgeoning, her love-life happy and settled. But there's plenty more on her bucket list: "There are so many things I want to do! I want to start a fashion line, finish my book, write another book, write a musical, write a screenplay, be in films, be in a Broadway production, tour the world, make a spoken word album – all of it. And I feel pretty confident that I will in due time."

I honestly wouldn't be at all surprised. Ⓓ

The single She Keeps Me Warm and album Heart On My Sleeve (UK Exclusive) are both released on 31 July.

DIVA subscribers can read Mary's thoughts on ambition, Adele, plus-size style and being bipolar in their exclusive, monthly e-newsletter. Just email *rory@divamag.co.uk* and put "DIVA newsletter" in the subject heading.



MARY WEARS TOP AND JEANS **EVANS**, FRESH FLOWER CORSAGE **PALAIS FLOWERS**





Romantic friends: the Ladies of Llangollen

A Very Queer Romance

AS NORTH WALES GEARS UP FOR ITS ANNUAL PRIDE EVENT, NAT NEWMAN INTRODUCES THE LADIES OF LLANGOLLEN, THE COOLEST LADY-LOVERS YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF

On a stormy night in 1778, Lady Eleanor Butler put on men's clothes, climbed out the window of her aristocratic home at Kilkenny Castle, and made her way to Woodstock, 12 miles away. She was riding a horse for the first time in her life. Her object? Miss Sarah Ponsonby, who at the same was climbing out of her own window, in men's clothing, with her dog Frisk and a loaded pistol. Meet the Ladies of Llangollen, the coolest lady-lovers you've never heard of.

Lady Eleanor Butler was born in 1739 into one of the most prestigious families in Ireland. She enjoyed a good education and was by all accounts a bit of an eccentric bookworm. She had received several proposals of marriage but never gave away her hand. A potential suitor once said that she was "a woman that no man will conquer". Instead she was to be conquered by the Honourable Sarah Ponsonby.

Sarah was also from a good family but, orphaned at a young age, she was sent off to boarding school. She was only 13 when she met Eleanor at the school in Kilkenny, but the two became firm friends and spent the next 10 years in close communication. They were both extremely intelligent, and they shared a love of education, poetry and refinement of the mind. They weren't interested in fashion and parties and the general pursuits of the aristocracy. They just wanted to be left alone.

Events reached a crisis when, in 1778, Eleanor was facing pressure to join a convent and Sarah was receiving unwanted attention from her guardian, Sir William Fownes. They concocted their scheme of escape, and on that stormy night they took their chance.

After travelling through the night, the two ladies met up in a barn, where they laid low for two days. Unfortunately, the boat which should have taken them away to England and freedom did not sail. They were found and sent back to their homes.

"The runaways are caught," wrote close family friend Mrs Tighe, with great relief. "There were no gentlemen concerned; nor does it appear to be anything more than a scheme of romantic friendship."

But this "scheme of romantic friendship" was one in which they were very resolute. After their night spent in the barn, Sarah fell quite ill. Eleanor, who had been sent away to live with her sister, once again absconded. She was missing for a few days until she was finally discovered. She was hiding in Sarah's cupboard.

The situation had become intolerable. The two women were clearly inseparable and would go to any lengths to stay together. On top of it all, the news that Fownes had been making moves on Sarah was now generally well-known. He pleaded with Sarah, apologised profusely, said that he would never offend her again. But Sarah was a young woman with a firm mind. She thanked him for his past kindness, and insisted she would never again be under any obligation to him. Nothing would make her budge. She was her own mistress. She would live and die with Miss Butler.

The ladies abandoned Ireland forever, and arrived in Wales on 16 May 1778.

Not far from where Sarah and Eleanor landed lies Hendre Hall, a Grade II listed building, where North Wales Pride will be held in the last weekend of July. It's a distinctly northern Welsh

PHOTOS WELLCOME LIBRARY, LONDON



event, with revellers camping out in the fields surrounding the old stone farm building near Bangor. Carwyn Humphreys, chair of North Wales Pride, says that the choice of venue is important to the event. "There isn't a major big city in North Wales. The gay community is very dispersed. This is an opportunity for people to come to North Wales, camp over and enjoy the weekend away in an entirely different setting."

Fortunately, the idea of two women setting up a home together is not as shocking or scandalous as it once was. That's not to say that problems don't still exist in Wales. Humphreys says that there can be a sense of narrow-mindedness within smaller communities, especially in rural Wales. They specifically don't call their event a Gay Pride. It's simply Pride. "We try to be as inclusive as possible. We try and say it's for anybody, come and be part of it. It's about being accepted. We don't always want to be labelled."

This is a sentiment the Ladies would have vigorously agreed with. After the excitement of their escape and elopement, Sarah and Eleanor settled in Llangollen. For many years they lived a very mundane and unexciting life, which is exactly what they wanted. They enjoyed solitude and were known locally as the "ladies in the vale". They read constantly, learned several languages, gardened and renovated their cottage. They were largely self-sufficient, with a kitchen garden, fruit trees, cow and dairy-house. They even brewed their own beer. Soon, however, rumours of their existence started to get abroad. Due to their location on the London-Holyhead road, they began to receive visitors, among them Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott and Princess Caroline. Wordsworth even wrote a poem about them! There was no end of people who were curious about these two ladies who had shunned men in pursuit of romantic friendship.

The question that always comes up is, were they really lesbians? By which everyone means, did they do it? In her biography of the Ladies of Llangollen, Elizabeth Mavor states that they were soulmates and no more. There was, according to Mavor, no sexual attachment between them. What is undoubted is that they dressed mostly in men's clothing, slept in the same bed, called one another "beloved" and that Lady Eleanor "hung up her hat with the air of a sportsman". They had a happy, peaceful life together for 50 years. They never spent a single night apart. It is possible that they shared the same bed for that time without the occasional hand slipping under the occasional nightdress, but we will never know.

And it doesn't matter. Queer relationships embody a broad spectrum; the amount of sex you are or aren't having, or even if you're having it at all, is not the measurement of lesbianism. One of the reasons the Ladies were kept apart is that they "appeared to encourage each other's eccentricities". That sounds like the perfect description for any successful relationship.

When the two ladies were hiding out in that barn, disappointed by the cancelled ship, awaiting their imminent capture, could they ever have hoped that they would soon be living an idyllic and tranquil life in the rolling hills of northern Wales? Or that one day, just 50 miles away, an event celebrating the kind of life they wanted to live would be held? Or that the country they ran away from would say yes to marriage equality with tears of joy?

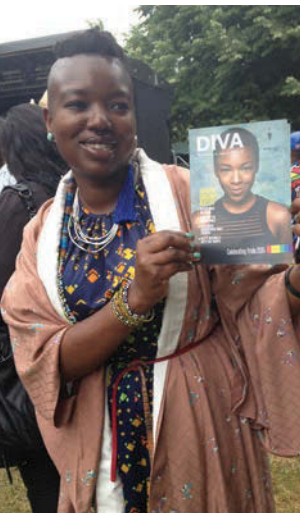
Could they ever have imagined that the quiet, retiring life that they wanted, to be able to live together with the person they loved regardless of their gender, would one day be the right of every person in this country? It's not often we get to hear stories like this, but these ladies, despite their initial hardships and hiccups, really did live happily ever after.

Missing for a few days, Eleanor was found hiding in Sarah's cupboard

North Wales Pride takes place at Hendre Hall on 24-26 July.
northwalespride.com









Pride in London

WE HAD A GREAT TIME AT THE CAPITAL'S BIGGEST PRIDE EVENTS YET

This year's Pride In London was the biggest yet, with an estimated 950,000 people taking part in the celebrations. DIVA was lucky enough to march with Stonewall (and Jack Monroe!) in their first Pride since becoming inclusive of trans people, and the response from those lining the route from Baker Street to Whitehall was incredible. While the debate over whether Pride in the capital has become too commercial rages on, the day was largely peaceful, and we're thankful that we can march in safety, unlike our brothers and sisters in Istanbul and beyond. As well as the parade, and Sunday's massive celebration for QTPOC, UK Black Pride, there was also Picnic in the Park and a cool party at Pride East. Judging by the pictures, a great time was had by all. Ⓓ

PHOTOS CARRIE LYELL, PAPARAZZIVIP, JANE CZYZSELSKA, ROD LEON

















2015



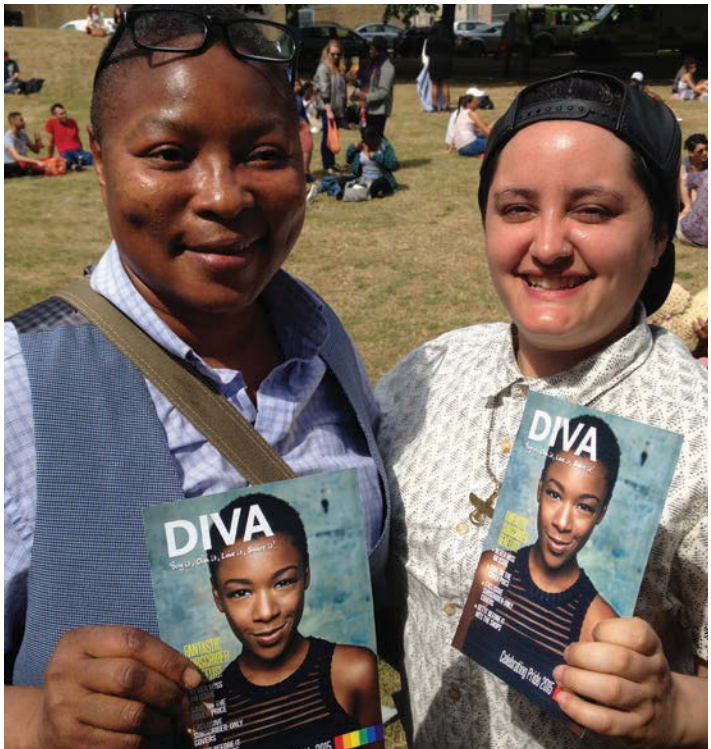












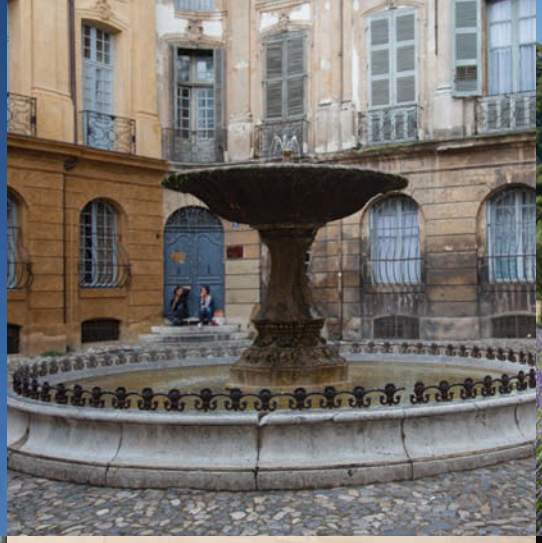














Not a bridge too far: Eurostar brings Avignon's famous pont closer, along with all the delights of Provence









Make tracks in AVIGNON









LUCY FRY TAKES THE NEW EUROSTAR ROUTE TO ONE OF PROVENCE'S MOST HISTORIC CITIES

There is something timelessly romantic about a long weekend in Provence. But just as I love the South of France, so too do I hold a special place in my heart for long, fast train journeys, particularly when they take me through unfamiliar countryside. That's why, when I heard of the new direct Eurostar route from London to Avignon in under six hours (and Marseilles in under seven), I booked the wife and myself a mini-break tout de suite. Not only was this a more eco-friendly way to whizz ourselves to a stunning medieval city than flying, but it was also a whole lot more relaxing and also relatively inexpensive (depending on when you book).

So, what can you do in just under 72 hours in Avignon? Quite a bit, as we found out. The city centre is very small (the size of central Bath or Oxford) and can be mooched around in a couple of hours. We started with a quick visit to the Tourist Office on Cour Jean Jaurès to gather maps and information before kicking things off with the Unesco World Heritage site, Le Palais des Papes (Palace of the Popes). It's an imposing medieval castle, built in the 14th century, when it was the seat of the papacy. Allow yourself an hour at least to explore all the atmospheric courtyards, cloisters and (vast) chapels, and get a full sense of the money and power that built these imposing halls before traversing the famous adjoining semi-finished Avignon bridge that stops halfway across the Rhone (€13.50 for combined palace and bridge ticket).

Really, the scenery, history and ambience are the main reasons for visiting, unless you love designer shops (of which the city is full to bursting). You can take it all in via foot, bicycle – rent a "Velopop", the equivalent of London's Santander Cycles – or le petit train d'Avignon (actually a small electric bus) which trundles about for 40 minutes, leaving every hour from outside the Papal Palace. Beyond a few boozing Brits, there really isn't a lot of party action and on Sundays all shops, and most museums, are shut. Bar Tapalocas on Rue des Trois Carreaux does cheap tapas and cocktails, and for those who simply can't go anywhere without their Guinness, there's Irish Pub (O'Neills) on Boulevard de Raspail. There's certainly no LBTQ scene to speak of (we heard rumours of a gay bar called L'Esclave but couldn't find it), though we meandered constantly in a hand-holding, couply kind of way and endured fewer double takes than in London.

The other major reason to spend time in Avignon – and Provence in general – is food and drink, although I did notice an enticing-looking yoga studio too (*inspireyogaavignon.fr*). As you'd expect, local wine (my wife took a particular liking to the rosé) is plentiful, varied and far cheaper here than in the UK. Aside from the mediocre tourist traps in the majestic main square, Place de L'Horloge, most restaurants offer the usual French favourites – steak frites, moules and salads full of gorgeous local ingredients – and a plat du jour option; usually whatever meat or fish is readily available, prepared in a delicious way along with whatever vegetables are in season.

We enjoyed one daily dish at E.A.T. on Rue Mazan (nothing like its fast food London counterpart) and another at Chef Concept inside Avignon's main market, Les Halles, where you can buy bread, meat, cheese, mustard, tapenade and other garlicky yummies. More like a pop-up than a restaurant, Chef Concept is all about locally-sourced, high quality seasonal fare. Here we were cooked for and waited on by one friendly lady whose ratatouille could, in theory, turn me vegetarian were it not for the mouth-watering cod that accompanied it.

Speaking of which… there's no easy way to put this: vegetarianism and veganism aren't much respected here. Terre de Saveurs on Place des Corps stated that it offered "Typically French Vegetarian Cuisine" and then boasted a menu that included fish and lamb. (Go figure.) It was, however, in a good spot for lovers of both tea and steak (at L'atelier des Teas) and tartines of all flavours (Ginettes & Marcel).

Despite its unfailing beauty, we were pleased that we weren't ensconced in Avignon's magic kingdom for the entire duration, instead choosing to keep costs down by staying at the 3* Logis Hotel Le Petit Manoir about 2.5km away in a small town called Les Angles. Given how inexpensive rooms were (€65 per night for double, ensuite and balcony) we were very pleasantly surprised by the pool and the restaurant, La Tonnelle, where we dined twice under sun-dappled branches in true Provencal style.

Though Les Angles itself is a fairly unremarkable place, it is easy to get from there to Avignon by bus (€1.50 single, 5-10 minute ride) or on foot in 25 minutes to Villeneuve lez Avignon, another gorgeous medieval town full of markets, viewpoints and al fresco lunch-spots. Over a pavement coffee next to a music school, where the sound of car wheels on cobbles competed with notes played by an amateur saxophonist, the wife and I debated whether we actually preferred this smaller counterpart to Avignon itself. I think perhaps I did, but she wasn't sure. We also disagreed over whether we'd rush back – she is heart-set on returning next July for the annual international Avignon Festival, whereas I'm keen to go all the way to Marseille next time and hit the beach. Either way, though, Provence is definitely on the menu (and in under seven hours at that). D

> The major reason to spend time in Avignon is food and drink

GET THERE AND STAY THERE

Eurostar's new (May 2015) year-round service takes passengers from the heart of London to the centre of Lyon, Avignon or Marseille. Return fares start at £89 return for Lyon and £99 return for Avignon and Marseille, with up to five services a week, depending on the time of year. The best journey times from London are 4h41 (Lyon), 5h49 (Avignon TGV) and 6h27 (Marseille St Charles).

For more information, or to book, visit *eurostar.com* or call 03432 186 186.

Logis Hotel, Le Petit Manoir and Restaurant La Tonnelle : *logishotels.com*
Rooms start from €55 per night.

avignon-tourisme.com

PHOTOS EUROSTAR








Eco Ibiza

JOANNA BENECKE DISCOVERS A DIFFERENT, QUIETER SIDE TO CLUBBING MECCA, IBIZA

Clubbing, drugs, phat beats, Fatso's English Cafe and neon-hued rave wear. That's the image I've always had of the Party Island, aka Ibiza. As someone who prefers a vegan supper club to a superclub and has never even owned a glo-stick, I approached my Balearic holiday with some trepidation. Then I arrived and discovered that a haven of tranquillity, yoga, sea, sun and delicious vegan food exists in perfect harmony with the club scene.

I began my trip in surprise luxury, as a kindly relation made me their plus one for the Heathrow first class lounge (purely for vegan research purposes, of course). I found that most foods were clearly labelled – "vegetarian", "gluten-free", "vegan" – and helped myself to a tasty plateful of chickpea salad, fresh veg and delicious fried potatoes.

STAY

Tourism is Ibiza's main industry, so accommodation is plentiful and varied: from hostel to five-star hotel. For something slightly different, why not hire a villa up in the hills? We stayed a 10-minute drive from the partyville of Sant Antoni, in a private house with pool, air-con and stunning views. At night, sitting on the terrace sipping a glass of hierbas (the local herb-infused liqueur) the smell of the pine trees and the sound of the cicadas blend seamlessly with the faint beats drifting up from Pacha, Amnesia and Privilege and give a unique Ibicencan backdrop to stargazing at the incredibly clear night skies. See *ecoibiza.com/en* for villa info.

GAY

As you might expect from the original hippy island, Ibiza is very gay-friendly and both local and visiting same-sex couples are pleasingly in evidence. Head to the Moorish fortified city of Ibiza Town – now a UNESCO World Heritage Site – and wander up the cobbled streets to reach the gay quarter. It's full of bars, restaurants and clubs, but annoyingly, only one is female-orientated: Sunrise (no website, De La Virgen 44, Eivissa), run by lesbian DJ Monica, who also spins decks at Anfora, a lesbian-friendly gay joint (*disco-anfora.com*).

PLAY

Finding organic food on the island can be difficult, but worth the effort as the sun-drenched fields and orchards produce such delectable fruit and veg, it's a shame to dull it with pesticides; head to the co-operative Forada Market (Saturdays, *local-products-market.ibiza4all.org*) to buy local eco produce. For eating out, The Rabbit Hole (*rabbitholeibiza.com*) in San Rafael is my bolthole of choice. Run by the lovely and inspirational Isotta and Francesco, this vegan Alice-in-Wonderland-decorated cafe and bar is out-of-this-world wonderful. Sit outside on the muralled terrace, or inside on a cosy sofa, and drink a freshly-made organic fruit and veg juice (ask for one blended with black pepper!), before moving on to the perfectly-formed falafel burger. No animal products, no gluten, no frying, no refined sugar – everything we sampled was outstanding. Also worth a visit is the pricier Wild Beets (*facebook.com/wildbeets*) in the upmarket boho town of Santa Gertrudis. Why not book a reformer pilates class at the neighbouring studio (*ibizapilatesuk.com*) before nipping next door to go crazy for the organic vegan rawfood delicacies on offer (and use the free wifi)? If you're into yoga, check out (*ibizayoga.com*) for retreats and beachside classes. Herbarius in Sant Antoni is an excellent healthfood shop stocking local and international delicacies. Next door is the newly-opened Bio Karma (*biokarma.es*), where the friendly owners will explain how their mission is to appeal to omnivores by creating irresistible vegan versions of Italian classics like parmigiana, using healthy organic ingredients. The brisk trade suggests they are succeeding!

WAY
BA flies from Heathrow and London City to Ibiza. EasyJet offers departures from Gatwick, Luton and Stansted.

FIRST CLASS

NEWS!

FREEZE IN SUMMER



This year it's the 10th anniversary of Icebar London, designed and carved by ice artist, Jens Thoms Ivarsson, using fresh ice from the Torne River in northern Sweden. This year the theme is "frozen food" so you can drink cocktails or dine amongst crystal clear cupcakes and a giant frozen pineapple. There's even a hipster food truck, all made entirely from... yes, you guessed it... ice.

icebarlondon.com

DON'T MISS

TOTNES PRIDE



Launched in 2013, Totnes Pride is all about celebrating diversity in the local area and raising awareness of the issues faced by the LGBT+ community in rural areas. That's why on 5 September there'll be a procession led by a Pride peacock (obviously...) and the award-winning Samba Roc band. The event also includes a community day and range of inspirational talks along with plenty of crafts and face-painting for little ones. Special guests include singer-songwriter CN Lester and Proud2Be patron Nigerian gay rights activist Aderonke Apata.

proud2beproject.org



HOT HOTEL

PHOENICIA, MALTA

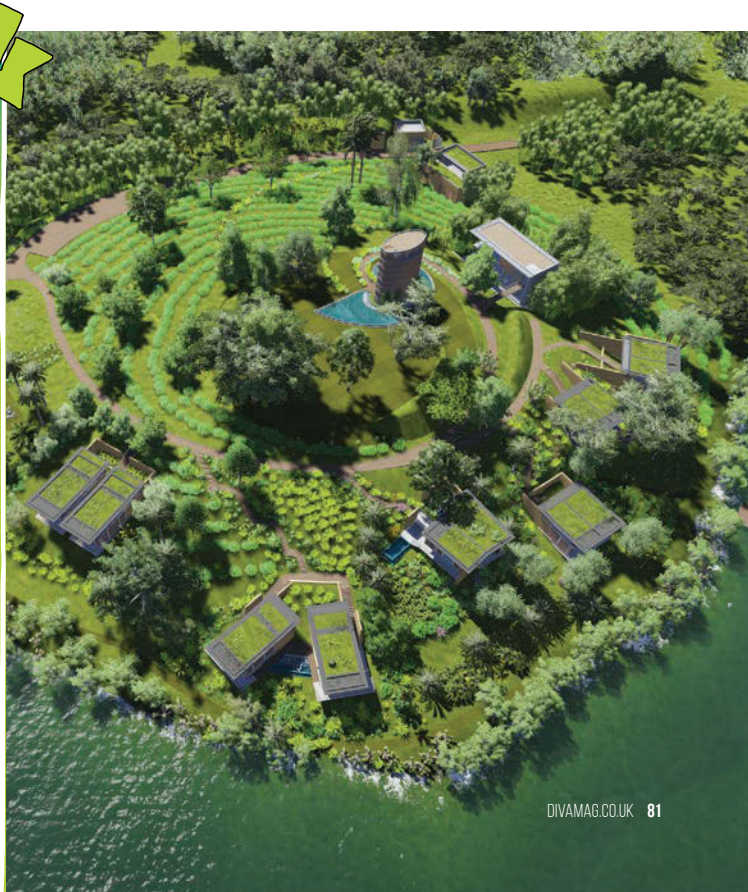
Yes, hot in every sense of the word! Not only is the Mediterranean island of Malta a beautiful holiday destination but the iconic Phoenicia Hotel, next to the city walls of UNESCO World Heritage city, Valetta, is now offering civil ceremonies and unions (the Civil Unions Act officially became law in Malta last April, allowing same-sex couples to marry and adopt children). Later this year, on 10-11 October, Phoenicia Hotel will host Malta's first civil unions fair. Prices start range from £800 to £3,760.

weddings-malta.com

ECO CORNER

Opening in November in Sri Lanka, Tri is built by a visionary award-winning British architect, Rob Drummond. Drummond specialises in contemporary designs and this time he's taken the spirals of the mathematical Fibonacci sequence as his inspiration. Not only is Drummond deeply committed to sustainability but he's doing all he can to protect the site's natural assets, both in terms of the environment and the local community. These include developing living walls, green roofs and solar arrays, and using recycled wood and local materials. The food is also organic, contemporary and locally sourced.

trilanka.com



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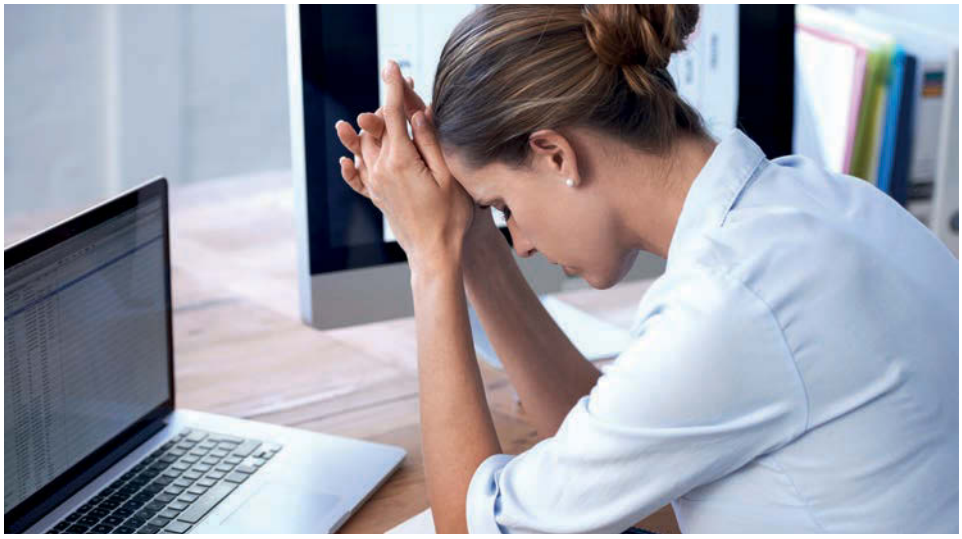
CLASSIFIED FEATURE - UNDERSTAND YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK

QUALITYSOLICITORS BURROUGHS DAY

Being gay is who you are. If your employer doesn't understand, it's time to see an employment lawyer.

Sex discrimination at work has been illegal since 1975, race discrimination since 1976 and disability discrimination since 1995. It took until 2003 for sexual orientation discrimination to receive equal protection by law.

The good news is that today's protection under the Equality Act 2010 is wide-reaching.



Ten things you should know about gay rights at work:

1. You have rights from day 1 of your employment. In fact, your rights exist even before that – during the job application and interview process.
2. You can still be employed and bring a claim for sexual orientation discrimination at work.
3. Most people are protected, including employees, soldiers, partners, police officers and some self-employed contractors.
4. It is unlawful to be bullied or harassed because you are gay.
5. Unlawful treatment can also include not being promoted because you are gay or in a civil partnership or being refused dependant's leave for your civil partner or wife.
6. The protection applies if the treatment is because you have a gay friend or family member. It also applies where people are perceived to be gay and are treated less favourably on that basis.
7. Unlawful treatment can be very subtle. Ignoring someone at work can potentially be a form of discrimination.
8. Surprisingly, discrimination is sometimes legally justified, for instance where there is an occupational requirement for employees to be of a particular sexual orientation.
9. 'Positive action' is lawful in certain circumstances – this is where individuals who are underrepresented in the workplace are given more favourable treatment e.g. promotion.
10. Compensation for successful discrimination claims in the Employment Tribunal is unlimited. It includes financial loss and injury to feelings.

QualitySolicitors Burroughs Day

Discrimination at Work Lawyers

Who are we and how can we help?

We are employment law experts. Our employment team specialises in discrimination at work.

We provide confidential, practical advice. Employment law is a complex area of law that we understand inside out.

If you have experienced or are experiencing discrimination in the workplace, it is important that you take advice from an expert. Our track record speaks for itself: we have successfully acted for a number of employees experiencing problems at work on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Contact us for free first advice:

Web: www.qsbdlaw.com
Email: employment@qsbdlaw.com
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A-Z CLASSIFIEDS

APPOINTMENTS

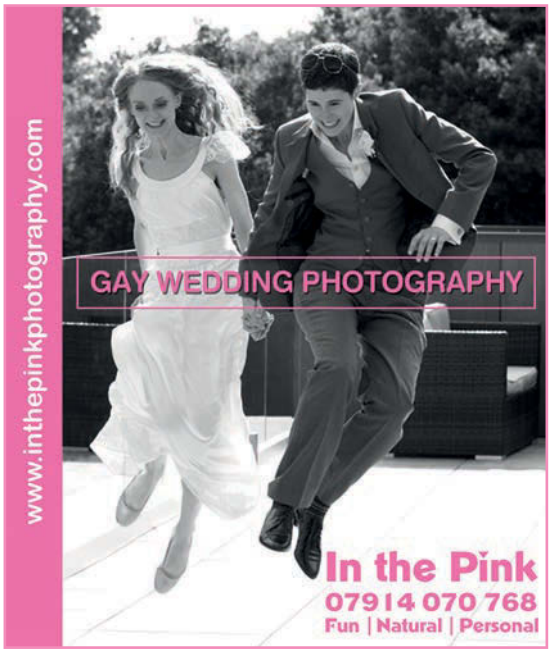
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LEGAL

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Children
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Housing
Possession, eviction, homelessness and disrepair.

Will and Probate
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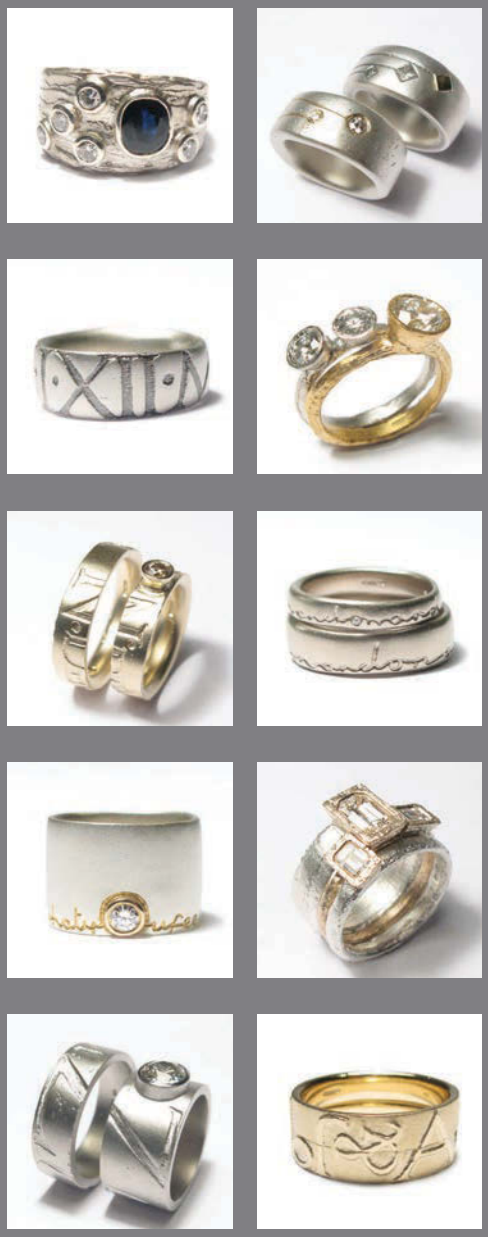
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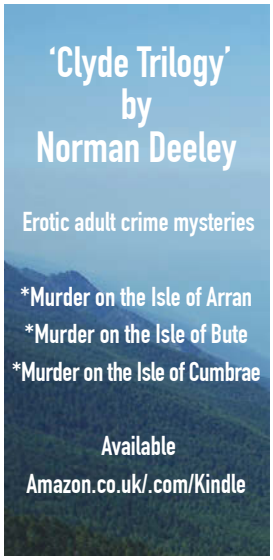
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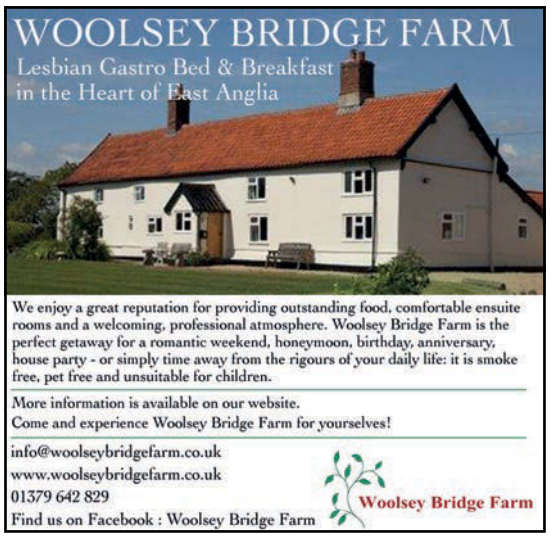
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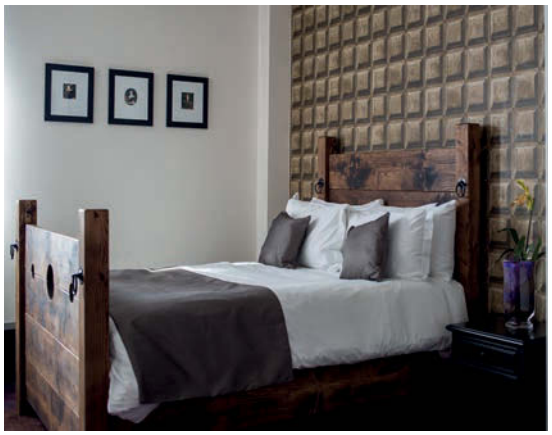
CLASSIFIED FEATURE - THE STAR INN, ALFRISTON

A STAR FILLED COUNTRY BREAK – WORDS BY NICKY OSBORNE









Make tracks to the countryside from bustling Brighton or London after a hectic week at work, and be charmed by The Star at Alfriston, a timeless village at the foot of the South Downs. With Brighton only half an hour away, and direct frequent train services from nearby Berwick station to Brighton or London, The Star is the perfect weekend getaway.

From the moment you enter the heavily-beamed bar, you are travelling back in time. This Grade Two Listed inn was originally built to accommodate pilgrims on their travels between Battle and Chichester, and is loaded with character.

The Star Inn successfully combines history and modernity. The main bars have brick and wooden floors, chunky wooden tables and chairs, and not one but three beautiful fireplaces, which are roaring in the winter months. Subtle lighting enhances the glow of the fire and creates a perfect ambience, and you can lose yourself for hours as you sample the excellent menu and wine list.

A simple, airy yet elegant restaurant is available if you wish for more formal dining, perhaps to celebrate an anniversary or birthday, and The Sanctuary offers a quiet, cosy room for reading the papers or sampling an after-dinner tipple.

All 37 bedrooms have been completely refurbished and are funky and contemporary. Warm, sensuous colours create a cosy cocoon and all rooms feature stylish, modern bathrooms. The feature bedrooms are a must-see; two are located in the oldest part of the building and transport you back in time. The Smugglers' Lair bedroom has a handmade "stock" bed, which whispers indulgence and romance!

For the ultimate declaration of love, The Star has it all; a bespoke personal service, a variety of packages to suit all tastes and budgets, and a choice of stunning rooms and areas to make the day extra special.

Alfriston itself is a paradise for walkers and cyclists, with the South Downs Way running through the village. Quaint tea shops, an award-winning bookshop and elegant boutiques provide interesting retail opportunities.

So, what are you waiting for? Surprise your loved one, grab your overnight bag and escape to the country. As a tonic for all the rush and stress of modern life and living, treat yourself to this country retreat nestled in the Cuckmere Valley and don't delay.

We will be at Preston Park for Pride Weekend in Brighton, please drop by and have a chat with us!

For more information visit www.thestaralfriston.co.uk

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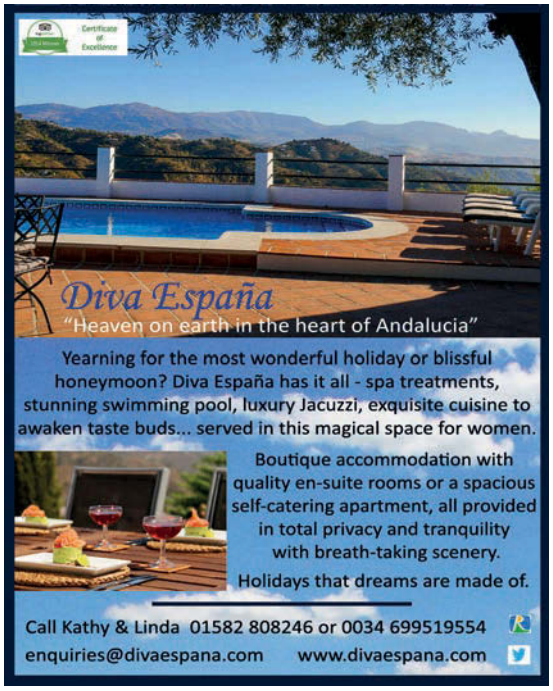
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PERIODS: AN ECO DISASTER?

JOANNA BENECKE IS BLOODY ANNOYED

BEAUTY

If you are one of the millions of women who experience pain, nausea, mood swings, cramps or other agony once a month, the last thing I want to do is make your curse worse. But I've recently discovered some pretty horrendous facts about the "feminine care" industry and what it's doing to both our bodies and our planet.

First, some numbers: the average woman uses 22 pads or tampons each month (and has her period for 40 years), which equals 10,560 during a lifetime.

In her fantastic graphic non-fiction book on the vagina, Kunskapens Frukt [The Fruit of Knowledge], Swedish writer/artist Liv Strömquist explains what ordinary sanitary towels and liners are made of: 90% crude oil plastics. This means they will never biodegrade in landfill. Ever. If you burn them, dioxides are released, polluting our air and water. So when the big corps, like P&G (which owns Always), tell us we need their products to feel "fresh", "clean" and – worst of all – "scented" (I now loathe the smell of san-pro aisles; why would I want my vag to smell of cheap air freshener?), they are actually making the world a less fresh, more polluted, dirtier place.

Tampons generally contain less plastic, but are made of chemically-treated cotton and rayon, which ain't great for the environment or your muff, as bits of the tampon often stay inside you, where toxins like bleach can disrupt your ladygarden's health.

But there are other options, many of which come with health benefits like less itching, less dryness and even period pain reduction. I know many of you are already screaming: I DON'T WANT TO USE A MOONCUP! That's ok. While a reusable menstrual cup is the cheapest and most eco-friendly alternative to lining the wallets of P&G, it's not for everyone. Let me present my curse-breakers...

GOT A GROOMING QUESTION? EMAIL EDIT@DIVAMAG.CO.UK OR TWEET JOANNA



PADS

ORGANYC

Of all the unbleached-cotton eco-alternatives to standard pads I've tried, these are my favourites. Soft but absorbent, the organic natural fibres mean that air can circulate, preventing bacterial growth and bad odours.

organyc.co.uk

TAMPONS

ELLEN

Swedish innovation: meet the probiotic tampon! Contains beneficial bacteria, scientifically proven to help maintain a natural vaginal flora and balanced pH levels. Distributors exist all over Europe, but not in the UK – booo. You can order from Amazon under the French brand name Saforelle.

ellenab.com





PANTS

THINX

Colour me obsessed with this new invention: pants that act like a pad! They come in a range of styles (from thong to full brief), absorb blood, control odour, and are fully washable. Use with a menstrual cup or tampon (unless your flow is very light).

shethinx.com



CHARITY

GIFT WELLNESS

The inspirational Zareen Roohi Ahmed is on a mission to make periods better for women across the globe. For every pack or refill pack of excellent pads you buy, a pack is donated to a woman in need. So far over 80,000 pads have been sent to women in Syrian refugee camps, and a shipment is now off to Nepal to help earthquake survivors.

femidirect.com



AND FINALLY...

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Made from medical-grade silicone (BPA- and latex-free), this can take some getting used to, but then frees you from the tyranny and expense of pads and 'pons forever! Fold, insert, let the cup expand into place, leave it to catch the blood, then carefully remove and empty, rinse and reinsert. A bloody eco dream come true.

mooncup.co.uk





Joanna Benecke is a writer with a green tea addiction who believes grooming doesn't have to be a dirty word.

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Backdoor Betty

ANNA SANSOM'S HOW-TO GUIDE TO SAFE, ENJOYABLE BUTT-LOVE

"I love giving my girlfriend anal sex. The first time she said, 'Fuck my arse… please,' I felt thrilled that she trusted me with this and that I got to do something I'd always been told was taboo. I pulled on a latex glove and dribbled lube down her butt crack, watching it run all the way down to her puckered hole. I ran one finger through the lube and slowly circled and stroked her opening. We'd already been playing for a while and I knew she really wanted to come. I ended up finger-fucking her pussy and her arse at the same time and she ended up coming really strongly. Afterwards I felt closer to her than ever before and in awe of how much pleasure her body could give her."

WHAT IS ANAL SEX AND WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT IT?

Anal sex is not just about penetration. It can also include stroking, kissing and licking the anus (also known as "rimming"). There are lots of sensitive nerve endings there that can offer you feelings of pleasure when this area is stimulated. For those who enjoy anal sex (on its own or combined with stimulation of the clitoris or other erogenous zones) it can feel ecstatic.

If you feel ambivalent or turned off by the thought of anal play, it is worth remembering that how you feel emotionally about anal eroticism is just as important as the physical sensations. If you feel relaxed, turned on, and trusting of the person who is touching you, you are far more likely to enjoy anal stimulation. If you feel anxious or scared, if you expect it to be painful, or if you are doing it only to please your partner, you are far less likely to enjoy it.

Perceiving anal sex as taboo or naughty can be a turn-on in its own right, it can help you feel bold and empowered, and it can also create a delicious sense of vulnerability and surrender.

For those who do enjoy anal sex (either as the giver or the receiver) it can add another fun activity to their sexual repertoire – one that can be

Never be afraid to say if something feels good – or if you want it to stop

intense and mind-blowing, as well as exceptionally intimate.

I'M WORRIED IT WILL BE MESSY

Faeces move into the rectum during a bowel movement. The rest of the time faeces are stored in the bowel. Normally there is only a small amount of faecal matter in the rectum and this means that, as long as you practice good hygiene, anal sex is no messier than any other kind of sex. Some people like to take a bath or shower before anal sex to help them feel clean and relaxed. Others may also choose to have an enema (but this is not essential).

There are precautions you can take to make anal sex safer in terms of transferring bacteria and protecting against STDs (see Precautions below), however, if you are super-squeamish about the possibility of coming into contact with any faecal matter whatsoever, anal sex may not be for you. It's worth remembering that any sexual activity can get a bit messy: you are the only person who can decide what you feel comfortable with.

WILL IT HURT?

There are three key words to remember when it comes to anal sex: relaxation, communication and lubrication. The anus has an external sphincter – a band of muscle – that contracts to close and relaxes to open. If you are feeling tense or anxious, you will naturally tighten your sphincter. If you then try to insert anything (like a fingertip or a butt plug) you may find it painful. However, it is possible to consciously relax your external sphincter and the surrounding muscles, making it much easier and more comfortable.

There is also an internal sphincter. This is controlled by your autonomic nervous system (the same system that controls other bodily functions like your breathing). Although control of the internal sphincter is involuntary, it works in tandem with the external one: you can encourage the internal sphincter to relax by relaxing the external one. Anal sex is not something to be rushed. Go slow, take your time, and enjoy the myriad of sensations and feelings. Going slow also gives your body time to relax and get comfortable.

If you are having anal sex with a partner it is essential that the two of you are able to communicate: yes or no, more or less, slower or faster. You can communicate with words, sounds, and/or movements – never be afraid to say if something feels good, if you want something done differently, or if you want it to stop.

Unlike the vagina, the anus doesn't produce its own lubrication for sex. You can use water- or oil-based lubricants: thicker lubricants are better at reducing friction. However, it's best not to use oil-based lubricant with latex (see Precautions below) and never use silicone-based lube with a silicone sex toy.

If anything hurts: stop.

WHAT TO USE?

You can use fingers, tongues, butt plugs, dildos, or anal beads around and in the anus. Be prepared for differences between fantasy and reality. In their fantasy, your partner might want you to fuck them in the arse with a strap-on; in reality, one finger might be enough.

You may just want to tickle and tease the anus externally. Or maybe just apply a little pressure to the opening. If you do decide to penetrate, make sure that whatever goes inside has a flared base that stays outside of the body – you don't want anything to get lost in there! All toys need to be washed after play: silicone toys can be boiled, others should be washable with antibacterial soap and hot water.

Make sure that anything used for penetration is clean before it is used too. If using fingers, make sure they are free of jewellery and that nails are filed and smooth. Latex, vinyl or nitrile gloves offer barrier protection and can easily be removed once the play is over. Similarly, condoms on toys can make cleaning up easier.

PRECAUTIONS

As with any sexual activity, it's good to be aware of safer sex precautions. With anal sex, think about STDs and also the risk of transferring bacteria from the rectum to any other body part. This means considering using condoms on toys, gloves on hands, and dental dams for rimming. It also means ensuring that you never insert a toy that's been in the anus into the vagina without first washing it thoroughly and/or changing the condom.

As a general rule you will want to have lots of lubricant available for anal play. You may want to experiment to find the one that feels best to you/your partner: thicker water-based lubes last longer and are easier to wash off.

There is another issue that rarely seems to get addressed in anal sex guides but is one worth noting: sometimes your body might not be in the best condition for anal sex. If you have had any kind of tummy upset, diarrhoea or constipation, it's best to leave anal sex off the menu. Equally, if you have piles (haemorrhoids), you will probably prefer to give anal sex a miss.

DO I HAVE TO HAVE ANAL SEX?

The simple answer is "no". No one should ever feel that they "have to" have any kind of sex that doesn't feel right for them. All sexual acts should come with complete and explicit consent. That said, if you are intrigued and want to do some exploration before making up your mind, you could always start by gently touching your own anus with a lubed finger. If it feels good you might want to explore further, if not, then feel free to decide it's not for you.

When it comes to partner sex it helps to communicate desires and any anxieties. If your partner wants you to touch them anally and you feel a bit icky or unsure, talk to them about it: find out what they would like and whether there is a place where their desires and your willingness meet. If you don't feel comfortable with it at all, they can always choose to incorporate anal play into their own self-pleasuring.

Ultimately, anal sex is one way to explore intimacy and pleasure: if it doesn't feel good, don't do it. And, if it does feel good: enjoy!

MORE INFO

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO ANAL SEX FOR WOMEN
by Tristan Taormino

THE WHOLE LESBIAN SEX BOOK
by Felice Newman



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SINCERE, QUIET
F, 61, GSOH, has two dogs, seeks F for good f/ship & further. Omagh/Co. Tyrone. Box 660622 ✉ DV 660622

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F, 52, enjoys the gym, fishing, pool, nights in/out, seeks honest F, similar age, for f/ship, maybe more. Swindon. Box 271087 ✉ DV 271087

FUN, TOMBOY
F, 36, likes football, cinema & nights out. Seeks feminine F, 30-40, for r/ship. Mancs. Box 798661 ✉ DV 798661

AMIABLE, HONEST
F, 45, seeks genuine F for good f/ship & r/ship. Slough. Box 188074

BABYFACED FEMALE
Lonely F, 37, seeks mixed-race F for good lasting r/ship & shared future. Coventry. Box 100798 ✉ DV 100798

DEEP, PASSIONATE
F, 54, seeks stimulating F with something to say for conversation & more. SE Ldn/anywhere. Box 269592

SPIRITUAL, SINCERE
F, 38, single mum, likes travel & writing. Seeks F for coffee, chats, possibly intimacy & more. Co. Down. Box 861404 ✉ DV 861404

HONEST, LOYAL, CARING
F, 62, n/s, large build, enjoys walks, theatre & film. WLTM F, 60+, for a forever r/ship. Kent. Box 704273

FEMININE, YOUTHFUL
F, 51, GSOH, thoughtful, n/s, has ME, likes animals & mystery. Seeks understanding, caring F, 38-55, for laughs+. L'pool. Box 913989 ✉ DV 913989

POSITIVE, OUTGOING, PROFESS
F, 51, seeks F for dancing in the kitchen, dog walks on the beach, good food, laughter & romance. Newcastle. Box 436275

GROUNDED, GENUINE
F, 38, seeks F who is kind to strangers & keen to share their best memories with someone special. London. Box 223704 ✉ DV 223704

COSY NIGHTS IN
Sincere F, 62, medium build, likes animals, walks & some reading. Seeks n/s F f/ship & good r/ship. Warwicks. Box 733509 ✉ DV 733509

LOUD, PROUD, CONFIDENT
F, 40, bubbly, likes dance & films. Seeks F for wild nights out & passionate nights in. Milton Keynes. Box 273975

DARK-HAIRED, SOCIABLE
F, 45, 5'1", medium build, likes socialising, travel & motorbikes. Seeks similar F for r/ship. W Ldn, Surrey. Box 187431 ✉ DV 187431

ATTRACTIVE, FEMININE
F, 49, likes the gym, reading & holidays. Seeks feminine lady for good r/ship. Yorks. Box 999700 ✉ DV 999700

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F, 37, single mum, seeks honest, loving F for real r/ship. Kent. Box 853359 ✉ DV 853359

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F, 69, loves good books & conversation & WLTM a free-thinking F with a sense of fun for f/ship, maybe more. Fife. Box 342583 ✉ DV 342583

BISEXUAL
F, 58, seeks lady, 45-60, for f/ship, maybe more. Nottingham. Box 957270 ✉ DV 957270

YOUNG-AT-HEART FEM
F, 51, likes most things, seeks similar F for f/ship, maybe more. Gloucs. Box 403344

THROUGH THE MIST
Attractive F, 52, 5'5", hazel eyes, seeks F for f/ship & r/ship. Glocs. Box 145226

BIG & BEAUITFUL
F, 49, big heart, fun, seeks F to be her soul mate. B'ham. Box 400696

AFFECTIONATE, CARING
F, 51, seeks genuine, similar F for f/ship & maybe more. Belfast. Box 357756 ✉ DV 357756

LOVELY
F, 27, seeks similar F for f/ship, fun & more. Wrexham. Box 620424

HONEST, SENSUAL
F, 63, 5'8", medium build, seeks similar F for good r/ship. Ldn. Box 584603

SINCERE, GAY
F, 36, seeks gay F for f/ship, nights out, meals out, etc. Rhyl. Box 163669

LIFE, LOVE & HAPPINESS
Sincere, loving F, 56, seeks lovely, laid-back, feminine F to share life, love & happiness. Exeter. Box 623594 ✉ DV 623594

MUSIC LOVER
Fun, outgoing F, 41. Seeks F for nights in/out, socialising & cinema. Mancs. Box 291609

SLIM, FEMININE
Bi F, 48, seeks similar F for fun, f/ship & maybe more. Central Mancs. Box 301282 ✉ DV 301282

HONEST, EAGER
F, 43, seeks F for long-term, lasting r/ship. Darlington. Box 204027

HONEST, SINCERE
F, 50s, likes days out, animals & cosy nights in. Seeks feminine, gay F, 40-60s, for fun & hopefully r/ship. Notts. Box 161268 ✉ DV 161268

HAPPY-GO-LUCKY
F, 53, slim build, WLTM F for f/ship, hopefully leading to LTR. W. Yorks. Box 411452

FRIENDLY, KIND
F, 52, 5'5", medium build, seeks similar F for mutual happiness & contentment. Mancs. Box 792911 ✉ DV 792911

GENUINE, FUN
F, 45, seeks F for socialising, laughter & r/ship. Mancs. Box 498200 ✉ DV 498200

EASY-GOING, NICE
F, 45, likes a laugh & socialising. Seeks F for fun & possible r/ship. Mancs. Box 789818 ✉ DV 789818

GENUINE, FRIENDLY
F, 75, non-drinker, seeks F companion, GSOH, with car, for cinema, good food & more. Devon. Box 828190

NO STRINGS

MUSIC TO MY EARS
F, 35, easy-going, loves life & likes music. WLTM F, local area, for sexy fun & f/ship. Merseyside Box 113991 ✉ DV 113991

GENUINE, FRIENDLY
F, 50, 5'5", likes DIY, cats & cooking. Seeks nice F for fun & f/ship. Ldn. Box 101823 ✉ DV 101823

FEMALES RULE!
F, 22, seeks F for great times. B'ham. Box 556726

LONG BLONDE HAIR
F, 36, genuine, broad-minded, enjoys swimming, music & horse-riding, seeks F for fun times. Suffolk. Box 255518

ATTRACTIVE, BISEXUAL
F, 60s, has a partner, seeks similar, bisexual lady for adult fun & f/ship. N. Surrey/Middx. Box 812077

EASY-GOING, SOCIAL
F, 35, likes concerts, shopping & meals out. Seeks feminine F for fun times. Mancs. Box 123477

JUST FRIENDS

COVERSATION & LAUGHS
Sincere F, 44, into food, cinema & drinks. Looking to put a group together of like minded F's, 35-55, for f/ship. Sheffield. Box 210859 ✉ DV 210859

HONEST, FRIENDLY
F couple, 46, love music & meals out. Seeks like-minded F friends for nights out in Glasgow. Box 282737 ✉ DV 282737

LIFE BEGINS...
Animal-loving F, 33, seeks friends for socialising, laughter, intelligent conversation & a little bit of mischief. Somerset. Box 757543 ✉ DV 757543

SINCERE, TRUSTING
F, 48, likes the outdoors & learning Spanish. Seeks Fs for chats & genuine f/ship. Ldn. Box 359170

Customer Services:
Dating FAQs & Advice Line
0906 200 1036
Calls cost £1.10/min plus network extras
Complaints & Service Provider
0330 333 6946

CALL CHARGES: Calls to 09062 cost £1.10/min at all times (BT Premium Rate). Calls to 09067 cost 80p/min at all times. Calls to 0800 are free. Payphones & non BT network provider charges may vary, 0800 numbers may be chargeable from mobiles. **TEXT SERVICE:** Replying to an advert is charged at £1.50 for every text response received. Advertisers will be charged 50p for every text response received and 50p for texts alerting them that they have a voice message. Please take care to follow the instructions as all messages are charged for, including error messages - charges dependent on shortcode. All texts sent must be no more than 160 characters & your standard network charges apply. SMS shortcodes are reverse billed at the following rates: 85010 - 50p; 84010 - £1.50. Available on all UK networks. **18+ only. Service provided by ATS, PO Box 788, London EC1V 7ZA. DISCLAIMER:** DIVA Magazine assumes no liability for the content of, or reply to, any personal advertisement. The advertiser assumes complete liability for the content of all replies to any advertisement or recorded message and for any claims made against DIVA Magazine as a result thereof. The advertiser agrees to indemnify and hold DIVA Magazine harmless from all costs, expenses (including our solicitors' fees), liabilities and damages resulting from or caused by the publication or recording placed by the advertiser, or any reply to such advertisement. By using Dial-a-Diva, the advertiser agrees not to leave his/her telephone number, last name, or address in his/her voice greeting message. Your ad may appear in other publications.



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NO PROBLEM

IF YOU'VE GOT ISSUES, WE CAN HELP

JUST MATES – SO WHY DOES SHE TEXT ME ALL DAY?

Dear Jane,
About a month ago I got talking to a girl. We met up and it was going great: she kissed me twice and before I got out of the car when she dropped me off we kissed again. But then the day after she said she just wants to be mates. Now two months have passed and we are still mates but she texts me every morning and throughout the day and night. To me this is making no sense because I don't text my other mates every day. Is there more to it or am I just thinking more about it? Why would you text someone every day if you're "only mates"? Please help because in all my past relationship I've just dived in. Thanks,
Frustrated

Dear Frustrated,
You don't say if you've seen this girl in the last two months since you kissed, or the content of her texts, but it certainly seems as though she's interested in staying in touch and reeling you in. The question is, what do YOU want? It sounds as if you'd like more, so I'm wondering what's stopping you from telling her? Perhaps it's because she seems to be giving you mixed messages: on the one hand saying she wants to be friends but on the other bombarding you with (possibly flirty?) text messages around the clock. Instead of spending your time responding to her texts, why not call her and have a chat about where you're both at? Is she seeing someone but for some reason hasn't told you? How would it make you feel if she was? It's clear that she likes the attention you're giving her and feels flattered. What are you getting out of it? Is there a part of you that enjoys this flirting at a distance, without commitment? Is there another part that would you like to have sex with her occasionally? Perhaps she's attracted to you but is scared of taking things further because of her past experience of relationships? It sounds as if you're not sure about your approach in previous relationships and that "just diving in" has not worked for you. Are you ready for a new or different kind of relationship? Lots of questions for you to think about but if you don't ask, you'll never know. Good luck!

jane

READERS' REPLIES

Firstly I would say stop over-analysing. Most of the best relationships are created from solid friendships. Perhaps she's coming out of a long-term relationship and wants to go slow. Just match her pace; if it's meant to happen, it will develop.

Elaine O'Shea

Sounds like she just wants to be mates but probably likes the fact that you are into her and likes that it makes her feel more attractive. From experience, I'd say move on. Stay friends but realise that if it was ever going to happen, it probably would have by now. Don't keep waiting for her as it sounds like she doesn't see you in that way.

Glenn Jones

PHOTO HOLLY FALCONER

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BONUS DIGITAL CONTENT IN THIS ISSUE:

AN EXCLUSIVE BEHIND-THE-SCENES VIDEO FROM THE MARY LAMBERT SHOOT, A PANT-WETTINGLY GOOD AND EVER SO CUTE VIDEO FROM OUR DESIGNER DOGS OF DIVA SHOOT AND LOTS OF EXTRA VIDS ON BISEXUALS ON TV, FREYA BENSONS'S GUIDE TO (NEARLY) ALL THINGS TRANS AND FOLK DUO O'HOOLEY AND TIDOW.

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LOVE YOUR WHEELS

RHODA MEEK TAKES HER TECH ON THE ROAD

TECHNOLOGY

I certainly love my wheels. She is a bright yellow transit van called Beryl.
Beryl takes a lot of beating. I can fit plasterboard, plywood, poly tunnels, dogs and a camp bed in her capacious rear. If only she was a pick-up, I would get a gold star for stereotypes...
I have already kitted her out with the essentials. I have two 12v charging points on the dash to charge a phone and a headset, and I splashed out on a converter which converts the 12v power into a UK socket, so that I can charge and use my laptop on the go as well.
All of this is great, but I want more. I want a fully hooked-up, 21st century vehicle, regardless of the registration. Thankfully, the internet has once again provided.

WHAT'S YOUR CURRENT GEEKY OBSESSION? LET ME KNOW! GEEK@DIVAMAG.CO.UK



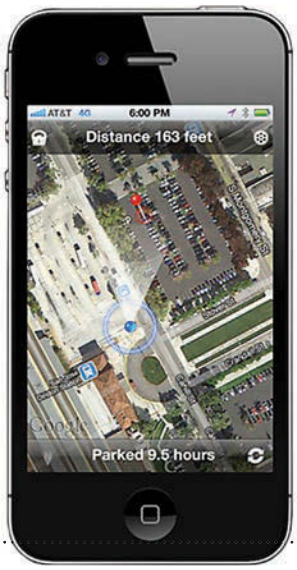
Rhoda Meek is an IT consultant and designer with a social media addiction, a crochet habit, a RaspberryPi and two left feet.
wodieskodie.com
@wodieskodie

PS. If all these suggestions leave you cold, remember that hot cars can bake cookies on the dashboard, and that your tomato plants would love a warm ride around town in a greenhouse on wheels.
tinyurl.com/DIVAcarbake

DUDE, WHERE'S MY CAR?

Even the best of us have been there. A long day working or shopping, and you emerge blinking into the daylight and stare at the rows and rows of parked cars. Where is it?
No more.
There are lots of parking apps around, but they do rely on you remembering to set the location before you get out of the car. Findmycarsmarter.com is changing that. This nifty little gadget plugs into your cigarette lighter, and will automatically tell your phone where it is. Plug and go. You would need to buy it from the US, and it currently only works on Apple devices, but I reckon it might be worth every penny for those who regularly misplace their wheels. For Android, check out Park Me Right on Google Play.







TORQUE TO ME

This is not for the faint-hearted, but if you want to really get under the bonnet and figure out what your car is doing in terms of torque, fuel consumption and warning lights, it might be time to get your hands on an OBD-II cable or Bluetooth transmitter, and download an app called Torque (*torque-bhp.com*). It displays realtime car performance using Google Earth, calculates horsepower and indeed, torque, and records your 0-60 automatically.



SOLAR, BABY!

Think about it, your car gets hot, right? It's a big lump of metal sitting there absorbing and reflecting the sun's rays. Where better to mount solar panels? I've not done it yet, but I fully intend to. It means that I could work on the road without having to run the engine. So much better for the environment – and free. I was inspired by this woman: inhabitat.com/install-solar-panels-on-your-car. There are loads of companies selling solar charging kits in the UK, and as DIY goes, it looks pretty straightforward.
Try *eu.voltaicsystems.com* or *bimblesolar.com*.





July / August

DIARY

IT'S THE DIVA LISTINGS AGAIN, WITH MORE PRIDE THAN YOU CAN SHAKE A RAINBOW STICK AT

1.08
BRIGHTON PRIDE
Preston Park, Brighton
Surely up there on most of your Pride cals? Salty stuff to sink your fangs into, as usual. Oh, and a certain Ruby Geranium or something will be 'coptered in for the main event. No? Me neither.
brighton-pride.org

25-26.07
PECS APPEAL
47-49 Tanner Street, London
Pecs are a mysterious, dark and enthralling gang of dandies who would like to lure you into the depths of the Victorian underworld where one is not born but rather becomes a man. Remember to the tip the velvet – and your waiter.
tinyurl.com/DIVAPecs

29.07
LIT STIMULATION
The Printworks, Hastings
Paul Burston's celebrated literary salon is going on a summer holiday. Cameos in the shape of All The Nice Girls, John McCullough and Jane Czyzselska – the one and only!
polariliterarysalon.co.uk

31.07
JOYSTICK
Cha Cha Boudoir, Manchester
Calling all gaymers, vitamin D deficients, numchuck toters, button flickers, joystick clenchers, Italian plumbers and layabout Laras – this night is yours and yours alone!
tinyurl.com/DIVAChaCha

31.07
HEIRS APPARENT
Marlborough Pub & Theatre, Brighton
Clap eyes on a real man this Pride at the drag king competition du jour, with music from anti-folk/punk parishioner Seth Corbin.
tinyurl.com/DIVABrightonKing

5-7.08
NOMAN'S LAND
Gilded Balloon, Edinburgh
Natasha Noman writes and performs a comedy based on her experiences as a gay, female journalist in Pakistan. Hoping to replicate her New York life in Karachi, Noman joins Tinder. This play details what happens next...
@Nomans_Land15

WHAT'S HAPPENING WHERE YOU ARE?

Send your listings to *dora@divamag.co.uk*

For weekly listings, visit *divamag.co.uk*

PHOTO PETE CARR

7-10.08
FAMILY PRIDE
Barnswood Scout Camp, Macclesfield
Family Pride is an arts and music festival aimed at LGBT families and their friends.
tinyurl.com/DIVAFamPride15

8.08
YARLS WOOD DEMO
Yarls Wood Immigration Removal Centre, Bedfordshire
Surround #YarlsWood is a protest organised by Movement For Justice which will bring attention to the campaign to shut down Yarls Wood women's immigration detention centre.
tinyurl.com/DIVAShutYW

14.08
IT'S ALL COMING UP ROSEANNE
Hackney Attic, London
Join us in Double Denim Delaware for a party devoted to Roseanne. A tribute to the woman herself, dysfunctional families the world over and badgoodgreat 90s dykewear.
tinyurl.com/DIVARoseannadu

15.08
UNSKINNY BOP
The Star of Bethnal Green, London
A body-positive disco for dime-store diamonds and bois done good. Only the best in spangly pop and the kind of rock n roll your mother warned you about will be tolerated. Grrrls to the front, ok!
unskinnybop.co.uk

21.08
BUTCH PLEASE!
Royal Vauxhall Tavern, London
The Female Masculinity Appreciation Society hosts an Opening Night Gala for the Wotever DIY Film Fest (*facebook.com/WoteverFilmFestival*). Get your outfit sorted and book early for this mega event.
tinyurl.com/DIVAFMASgala



UNTIL 16.10
BLIMEY O'RILEY
De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill on Sea
This exhibition illustrates illustrious artist Bridget Riley's dedication to form, colour and the interceptions of both by examining the single motif of the curve.
dlwp.com

22.08
VENT YOUR ZINE
The Feminist Library, London
Zany zines, salacious stalls, paper truths and pocket-sized activism at the Feminist Library's first EVER zine fest.
tinyurl.com/DIVAZineFest

22-23.08
GLASGAY
Glasgow Green, Glasgow
Glasgow gets the Pride treatment as queers + allies the city over take to the streets to kindly remind everyone that the first Pride was a protest.
pride.scot

28-31.08
MANCHESTER PRIDE
Citywide venues, Manchester
People say it always rains in Manchester, because it does. But! Without a bit of rain there would be no rainbows! And Manchester does gay very, very well. See Heather Peace and Texas at this year's Pride.
bigweekend.manchesterpride.com

1.08
LIVERPOOL PRIDE
Citywide venues, Liverpool
There is nowhere on earth like Liverpool, show the city some <3 this year as they prep for Pride. Particularly excited about FACT Liverpool's accompanying queer cinema programme.
liverpoolpride.co.uk





DIVA

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